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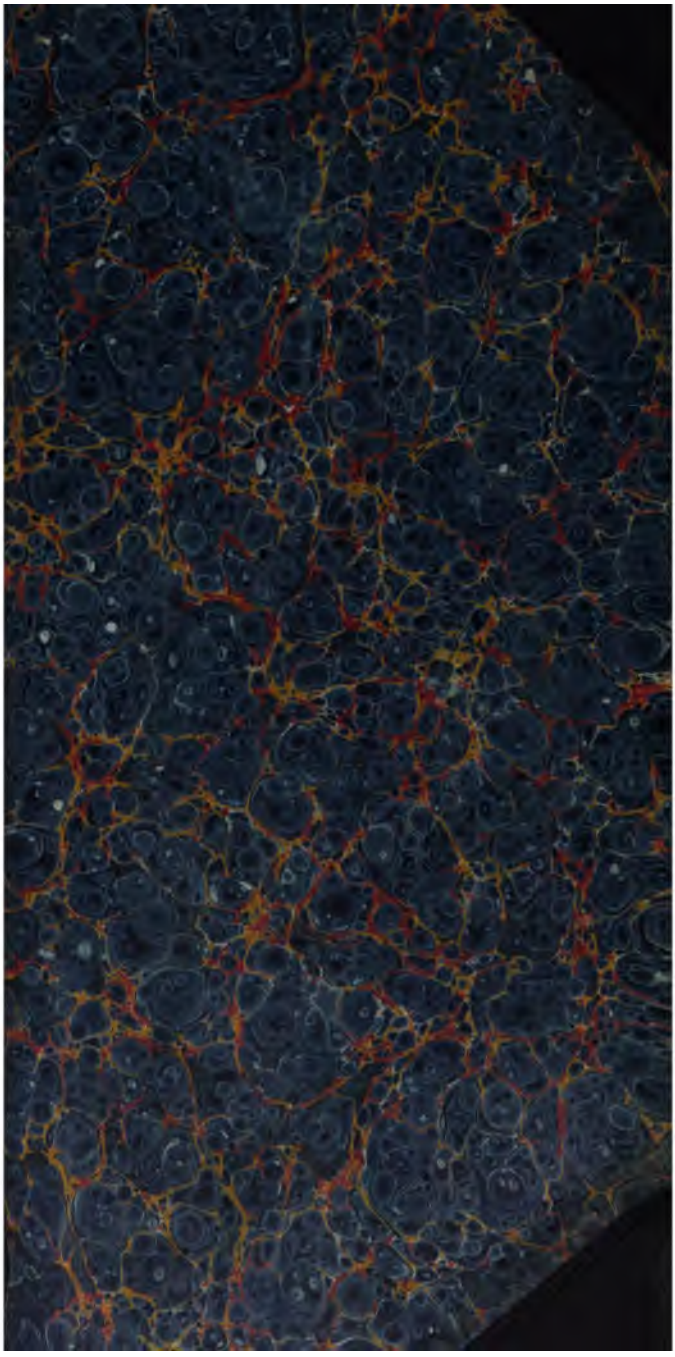

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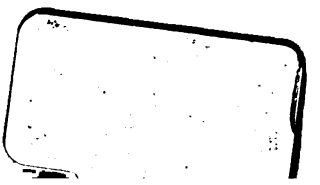

MELMOTH HOUSE:

A NOVEL.

IN

THREE VOLUMES,

BY

MRS. J. JENNER.

VOL II.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, AND SOLD BY
G. AUSTIN, BATTLE; SOLD ALSO BY BALDWIN,
CRADOCK AND JOY, NO. 47; WALKER AND
EDWARDS, NO. 44 PATERNOSTER ROW, AND
E. NUNN, NO. 48 GREAT QUEEN STREET,
LONDON.

1816.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

MELMOTH HOUSE.

LETTER I.

MISS ASHBOURNE TO MISS MELVILLE.

Scarborough, May 20, 1812.

IS it possible, my dear Emily, you can be such a simpleton, as to be ignorant of Sir Charles Belmont's meaning, when he told you,—He dared not express himself in language consonant to his feelings?—Recollect, he considers you as engaged; and, as a man of honor, is conscious he ought not to attempt the gaining affections promised to another. This, to be sure, is all very very fine; and, as he is one of the superlatives, he will amble about the frontiers for sometime. But a sudden

surprise, believe me, will one day bring him to confession.

Indeed, my dear Emily, you are extravagantly silly in this business, not to undeceive Sir Charles. Now, do let me manage for you. Banns shall be published at Reading,—between George Brensly, and Emily Melville. I will take care to make my appearance the second sunday; and, in an audible voice, say "*I forbid them!*" An eclaircissement is the consequence; and, by this little manœuvre, you will both be saved an immensity of sighs. Cupid defend me from a stupid lover! I can, at this moment, compare you, and Belmont, to nothing better than those exquisite savages at St. Dunstan's, in Fleet Street; substituting a heart for the bell. Both strike;—but get no nearer, than they were years, and years ago.

I beg you will feel due admiration at the number of lines, which I have written, without one word about myself. It is high time to begin; for I

have a thousand things to say, before I go to sleep.

Scarborough is a charming place; it agrees with my dear father, and is wonderfully pleasant to his daughter. When will you come to us? Do not let the summer pass away before you join us, I beseech you. Your unwillingness to leave Mrs. Caulfield is quite my Emily; but, when she is recovered, could not you, by easy stages, bring her to Scarborough with you? My good father approves of this; and, I am sure, wishes you to reside with us, no less than I do.

He certainly has the best luck of any man living; for, go where he will, some old dowager finds him out; or he finds one; that his daughter may have a piece of antiquity, as a foil to her youth, and beauty. No earthly reason else, I am sure;—for of my prudence, and circumspection, it is not in the nature of things to doubt;—though we have had a most serious conversation this morning; and the ob-

ject that gave rise to it I will tell you, if I am in good humour, when I finish my letter. But the advice, lecture, and conclusion, you shall have verbatim.

My father, dear good man, talks of his dissolution, as if it were only to step out of one room into another; though it always gives me a sad pang at my heart, whenever I think of being deprived of him.

The expectation of having you with us is frequently the topic of conversation; and yesterday, in connexion with our new acquaintance, gave rise to abundance of salutary advice.

I don't approve your plan of living with those Syms. Mrs. Syms's delicate health will not allow her to go into public; and, however respectable her situation in life, it is so very different from that, which you have been accustomed to appear in, I hope you will relinquish that plan, and put yourself under the protection of my good father, and his dowager friends.

But to return to the conversation, which I promised to lay before you. My father's countenance demanded attention. After a trifling remark or two on an absentee.—" Maria, (he continued) while you, and Emily have me for a protector; and cheerfully comply with my wishes not to appear in public without a respectable chaperone, you need no other guardian. But when I may be taken from you, I must intreat you, and Emily, not to think of keeping house without persuading some well-informed, elderly female friend, to reside with you." (Ugly enough to frighten the men, he means, I dare say.) " The censorious observations, to which you will be liable, youth cannot well avoid, but by the guidance, and countenance of experienced age. And I must particularly request, that, which ever may marry first, the other will not think of living with her friend." Almost petrified by the singularity of such a request, I could with difficulty articulate

mine for an explanation. "I am afraid, my dear Maria," said this tender father, "neither you, nor Emily, will coincide in my opinion; but, my love, I have had too many opportunities of being convinced of the fallibility of human nature, and how prone to inconstancy we are."—"You allude to the men, I suppose sir, not to the women."—"Perhaps, Maria, you are not altogether mistaken; but if man arrogates to himself the privilege of being more wicked, than he allows your sex to be, although the weaker; you have greatly the advantage of us in not being exposed to so many temptations. But neither man's self-created indulgence, nor woman's inferiority, will justify either in the practice of vice. As I am not speaking to one, whose heart I consider as wanting very great correction, I was only going to observe to you, my dear, the misery that frequently is the consequence, when young women take up their residence with their young friends, after they

become wives. There are many little occurrences in domestic life, that may cloud the brow of a wife, while her friend, who has none of those cares to discompose her, appears in smiling ease. The husband marks the difference, and is led to draw comparisons between his wife, and her companion, which too often are in favor of the friend; and to the disadvantage of the other. The cause for that difference he seldom adverts to. It is the effect that now strikes upon his imagination; and he conceives that pleasing opinion of the companion's good humour, which increased his attentions;—attentions, which first commenced in hospitable civilities; but, by imperceptible degrees, assumes a different character. The wife feels herself neglected. Resentment increases her misfortunes, 'till indifference, on both sides, takes place of affection; and they can neither of them account for the original cause of so lamentable a change. You are, I hope, convinced, that if

there had not been a third person constantly present, many little differences of opinion would have subsided, as of no consequence."—" It appears to me, my dear sir, that the husband only is to enjoy the pleasures of friendship."—" You misunderstand me, Maria; your husband ought to be considered as the first of your friends. But I hope my dear girl's heart is capacious enough to have many friends of her own sex; and even to admit some of her husband's. But let me caution you against giving too much of your company to any man, who may presume upon the friendship of your husband to become a constant visitor; especially at those hours, when he knows your husband is engaged. For, should you once raise that Hydra jealousy, not all your caution, and most correct conduct, can ever afterwards lay the fiend."

All this good advice, Emily, was intended for your edification, as well as mine; and therefore I have taken

the greatest pains to remember it for your use; and I will practice—what I can. Not one single atom do I approve of. One inference I can deduce for my comfort; *i. e.* My father thinks worse of the *he's*, than he does of the *she's*.

I am particularly annoyed by his advice not to make my husband jealous. That, I never *can*, never *will* follow. Great pleasure have I always figured to myself, in giving a gentle touch, as of a tarantula;—my voice being the music to allay the fever. No! if I give up that point, I forego half the pleasure of dear matrimony.

Whom do you think I danced with last evening? that too for the third time? no other, than your lover, Brensly. Now, really, Emily, I don't think him so *very*, *very* disagreeable. He certainly has nothing of the old school in his manners; except his attention to his father, who is quite a martyr to the gout. We are become tolerable friends, I can assure you: and, if you

direct your letters under cover to Lord Glenmore, it will come as safely to my hand, as I trust this will to yours.

LETTER II.

SIR CHARES BELMONT TO MAJOR YORKE.

Sunny Vale, May 26, 1812.

My dear Friend,

AFTER a most unpleasant journey to town with Mrs. Howard, and her son, I took possession of my new apartments in Grosvenor Street; and, at the end of the week, I thought I would go down to Sunny Vale for a few days; and then pursue my rout to Pevensey, in Sussex.

I cannot describe my sensations, as I approached the place of my nativity. A degree of religious melancholy possed my mind, as I surveyed the lofty,

and spacious apartments. The rich, though faded furniture, bears ample testimony to the magnificent taste of my ancestors. If I had pleasure in viewing the residence of my forefathers, it was so mixed with pain, I can scarcely pronounce, which was predominant.—"This chair," (I said to myself) "I remember my poor father used to sit in. On this table his arm rested, as it supported his head; while in pensive contemplation he heaved the sigh of tender sorrow, as he gazed on the portrait of his lost Julia. From the window of this elegant dressing room did my lovely mother take delight in viewing the beautiful scenery of the highly cultivated valley, at the base of Maram's-Court Hill. Contract the eye, and it falls upon a parterre tastefully laid out by herself."

From the house I hastened to the garden. I remembered many of the trees; some of which had afforded me shade from the scorching sun, while

their delicious fruits allayed my thirst. I was even childish enough to seek for a bird's nest, in a favorite yew hedge; and, as if to gratify me, it still maintained its former consequence with the feathered tribe, as with myself. A chaffinch's nest, with four half fledged young ones, were in it; their little throats wide extended to receive the food, which the rustling of the leaves, occasioned by my hand, led them to expect from their parents. The delight this little incident communicated to my heart, carried me back to my juvenile amusements; and I felt an interest for the hedge, the birds, and every object around me. A sigh obtruded itself, accompanied by a wish, that Emily Melville were with me to participate in the pleasure of rural pursuits. I looked about for some one, to whom I could communicate my sensations. Not a human being could I espy, but an old man working in the garden; and whom I found as deaf as the trees around him. To him I dare not

divulge the mighty secret of the bird's nest; as traps, nets, &c. were so skilfully placed in all directions, to inveigle and destroy these local depredators, that no mercy would have been shewn to my poor little chaffinch, and her family. I visited a mulberry tree, planted by the hand of my mother; and I question, if the famous mulberry tree of our immortal Shakespeare had a more enthusiastic admirer, than Lady Belmont had in her son; whose faint recollection of her seemed to be brought to his mind by the knowledge of this tree being planted by her hand. Mine was in the act of plucking a leaf, but suddenly withdrawn, as if on the point of committing sacrilege in despoiling the revered tree of a single particle of its beauty.

After wandering about the gardens for some hours, (which have been kept in excellent order by Lord Ormly, who rented it immediately on the death of my father, 'till within a few months of my return to England)

I went into the house, and again traversed the apartments. One I could not enter, as there was no key to be found for it, though I tried every one in the house. Tired with the attempts I had made in vain, I abandoned it; but, as I had no books, or any thing to amuse me, except writing, I wrote several letters. The unopened door again took possession of my fancy; and I returned to examine it afresh. Difficulty increased my curiosity; and, what then appeared of no importance, was now become an object of the first magnitude. To go to rest without exploring the secret of that door was morally impossible, I therefore sent William to Sevenoaks for a locksmith. Neither smith, nor William came; and I began to be uneasy about the latter; and, as my anxiety increased, my curiosity decreased. When he returned, which he did not before midnight, I was glad to retire to rest.

My first enquiry, next morning, was, if the smith had arrived.—"No,

sir, he will be here at eleven o'clock." True to his time, he made his appearance; and with him various instruments of violence. The door was opened; and, eager to explore the secret apartment, I almost broke my nose against—a blank wall; to the great amusement of this grinning son of Vulcan. For the first time did I observe, this false door was intended to preserve the uniformity of the room. "Lawk! your honor; I wonder how your worship did not see, as how, this here door opens into that there room." —"I wonder so too, my good fellow, I did not suspect my ancestors of a deception, so frequently practised by our modern architects. I dismissed the smith, rewarding him for his trouble; and I suppose the wisdom of the baronet will be proverbial in the district of Sevenoaks.

In the centre of the hall there is a large grey marble slab, which I, at first, should have taken to be a covering of one of my progenitors, if I had

ever heard we could have claimed a giant among them. There is a very long inscription on this slab; but rendered imperfect by the hand of time. What I could collect from this, well agrees with the manuscript I have in my possession, and the remains of a painted window, on which is still to be traced a company of warriors, with their lances, halting on the hill; and a young man appears to be looking up to the principal figure in the group; and, with his lance, pointing to the spot where the light falls. This appears so clear to me, that for your amusement, as well as my own, I will give you that account of my origin, which you have often been inquisitive to learn.

ROBERT DE BELMONT came over, a mere youth, with William of Normandy, when he visited Edward the Confessor. He returned with William to Normandy; and became his confidential friend. In the memorable battle of Hastings, he fought by the

side of the conqueror; and greatly distinguished himself by his prowess in arms. After the victory obtained over Harold, William pursued his rout to Dover, to subdue that fortress, before he attempted the subjugation of the capital.

Having accomplished that point, his army marched, in three divisions, towards London. William, and his friend were with the first. A fog prevented their having a view of the country; and they bore away too much to the left, which being discovered by one of their guides, a counsel of war was held; and, as it would occasion considerable delay to return back, William determined to proceed; and, the next day, they found themselves on the summit of Maram's-Court Hill, where they halted. The fog clearing away, exposed to the astonished army one of the most beautiful prospects, they had ever beheld. The valley, though mostly woody, was interspersed with fields of pasture and corn under the

hand of the reaper;—the harvest being unusally late, and much retarded by the scarcity of hands. De Belmont, enchanted by the view of so fine a country, exclaimed, "In that delightful valley, should I prefer a residence to any other in England."—"Say ye so!" cried the conqueror; "then, de Belmont, mark thy ground."

At that instant, the sun, which had been obscured for several days, emerged from behind a cloud; and shining with partial lustre, de Belmont pointing to the spot where the bright gleam fell, cried, "That is the situation of all others, I should choose." On which, William dispersed several of his men to the different land owners in that district, ordering their immediate attendance. They, who obeyed the summons, pleaded their peaceable demeanour, and his promised protection. But, as a great part of the valley belonged to the adherents of Harold, many of whom had lost their lives in his cause, the conqueror assumed the

right of heirship to their possessions, gratifying his followers by a grant of what was denominated confiscated lands. From the circumstance of the sun shining upon the spot chosen by de Belmont, it was ever after called Sunny Vale. A sword we still bear in our arms, with—*Bellator*,* for a motto.

How far you may be interested in this little anecdote of your friend's origin, I cannot pretend to say; though, I fear, you will draw this conclusion, that our military ardour has considerably diminished since our importation from Normandy. In the hall several helmets are still in being; not one of which will fit the head of their descendant. I am for cultivating the arts of peace more than of war; and, if I am employed, as I am daily in expectation of being, I will use my best endeavours, whether by holding out the olive branch, or sword, to obtain so desirable an object as peace. The

* A man of arms, a warrior.

clock has given me notice it is time to subscribe myself

Your faithful friend,

CHARLES BELMONT.

LETTER III.

MISS MELVILLE TO MISS ASHBOURNE.

Melmoth House, May 30, 1812.

My dear Maria,

IF it had been practicable for me to have joined you at Scarborough, Mr. Brensly's being there, in whose society I can perceive I should be obliged to pass much of my time, would instantly have decided for my remaining in Berkshire.

I am most awkwardly situated, and much perplexed, as well as grieved, by the illness of poor Mrs. Caulfield; which silences all scruples a sense of propriety might urge. Sir James, and

Lady Mitford left Melmoth House yesterday; Lady Mitford having had letters from Ireland to inform her, that Mrs. Seymour, her sister, was dangerously ill. Mrs. Seymour is a widow, left with two daughters of considerable fortune, and still better expectations. She is very anxious they should be committed to the care of Sir James, and Lady Mitford. For this purpose they are gone so suddenly; as there is little probability of her living more than a few days. I could have wished to have left Melmoth House when they did; but, in consequence of Mrs. Caulfield's illness I am detained here. It is not possible to think of removing her; she is become so extremely weak, it is with difficulty she can be prevented from fainting, when taken out of bed. My good Mrs. Mary Syms, and her neices, lively little girls, are here. Lady Mitford assured me Sir Charles was going into Kent, and Sussex, before he returns to Melmoth House. Sir James had a few lines from him,

the third day after he left Berkshire. No intelligence of him since, though it is near a fortnight since he left us. Certainly 'till he had seen the steward, and tenants in Sussex, there was nothing to write about. I suppose, when we leave Melmoth House, Mr. Dwyer, his man of business here, will inform Sir Charles of it. At any rate I shall request Dr, Syms to acquaint him with our departure.

Now, to advert again to your letter, my dear Maria, which seems to convey much mystery. Your good father's advice, that we should not live together after either of us are married, must surely arise from a supposition that one of us is soon to become a wife. Oh! that I may be mistaken in my conjecture, that Mr. Brensly is the object of my Maria's choice. I am sure he must go through a long probation, before he can be approved of by dear Mr. Ashbourne.

I never can think of the incident, which brought me acquainted with him;

but with amazement, and indignation. Some thoughtless young men, amongst the military, whan passing through villages, will notice girls, they see there, with too much freedom. Nothing, in my opinion, can excuse Mr. Brensly's conduct, but great impropriety in mine; or a combination of ignorance and effrontery in him. The first can scarcely be admitted for one, who has seen so much of the world, as he has. From whatever cause it proceeded, much vexation has it occasioned me; and, if you, my dear Maria, give your heart to so variable a being as Mr. Brensly, I tremble for your happiness. He never could be sincere in his professions to me, if he now avows the same for you. In my opinion, it is not possible to transfer affection so soon from one object to another. If Mr. Brensly can, he is too unstable for my beloved Maria to entrust him with the happiness of her future life. But with so excellent an adviser, as you have in your dear father, it is almost presump-

tion in me to give an opinion, formed with the eye of prejudice, and strengthened by the difference of character in another.

So little time have I at present for writing, that this letter has been several days in hand. Mrs. Caulfield takes neither medicine, nor nourishment, but from me;—a small gratification to her from one, nursed, and caressed, as I have been, by this dear, good soul, who is fast approaching to her dissolution.

Adieu, my dear Maria. In compliance with your request, I inclose this under cover to Lord Glenmore; though, believe me, I feel a reluctance, that makes me half angry with myself for being so silly.

My good old friend has just awaked with most alarming shiverings.

I can add no more than my kindest love to your revered father.

LETTER IV.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO MAJOR YORKE.

Melmoth House, June 14, 1812.

ONCE more am I at Melmoth House, from whence my thoughts have never wandered, but to return with the sweet anticipation of hope, that I may now enjoy the society of the amiable Emily; though her lovely countenance is at this time clouded with sorrow for the death of Mrs. Caulfield, the respectable elderly woman, who has lived so many years in the family; and for whom Miss Melville has shewn great affection.

On my arrival yesterday, about two o'clock, I went into several rooms. Not a living creature could I find but my friend Lion, the house dog. I

saw the Syms's walking in the garden, without Miss Melville. As she was the object I was in search of, I did not join them; but continued to seek her in Mrs. Caulfield's apartments, knowing that Emily frequently went there to amuse her by conversing, or reading to her.

As I approached, I observed the door was more than half open; Mrs. Caulfield's bed having been brought to the outer room, for the advantage of more air. An unusual stillness checked the hasty steps, with which I was advancing;—feeling some presage in my mind of the event that followed.

I stood motionless at the door, viewing the interesting object before me.

In a white robe, emblematical of the purity of her soul, sat Emily, supporting the head of the dying Mrs. Caulfield; while her other hand was employed in gently moving a fan, to render respiration more free. Her

cheek, which was flushed by the fatiguing posture, in which she sat, was frequently moistened by a tear, that stole down it.

Fearful of disturbing the last moments of this worthy woman; yet anxious to relieve, and assist Emily in her charitable office, I was undetermined whether I should enter or retire; when I heard a footstep near me. It was that of Dr. Syms. He motioned me to withdraw from my situation. I told him I hoped I had not been guilty of any impropriety: that, not being prepared to expect such a melancholy scene, my surprise, and anxiety for Miss Melville's health, had detained me at the door, 'till I could have an opportunity of speaking to one of the family. "Be under no apprehensions," the good man replied, "for Miss Melville; lovely, and delicate as she is, she is unlike those fine ladies, whose feelings are so refined, they forget what is really due to humanity; and suffer their nearest relatives, and

connections, to breathe out their last moments, surrounded by servants or mercenary nurses, who think more of the perquisites they may be entitled to, than of easing the posture of the poor sufferer, as you may observe now practiced by Miss Melville. It will soon be over; and that excellent young lady will be relieved from so painful a duty as the witnessing the decease of a real friend."

"I assure you, Sir Charles, (he continued) in my profession, I have frequently had cause to lament the want of resolution in our sex, as well as in the other, which makes them fly from the chamber of death. And I often think, that if a dying parent, husband, wife, or child, has a return of recollection before the final separation of the spirit from the body, what must their sensations be to find themselves deserted by those most dear to them."

A long and deep sigh from the sick chamber informed us all was over

with the poor woman; and, in a few minutes, the weeping Emily left the room. We met her; and taking the hand, she held out to me, I was leading her to the drawing room.

"To my dressing room," she cried in a soft tremulous voice; I obeyed; and opening the door, pressed her hand to my lips; and left her to write a few lines before the post called for the letters.

William came for mine; and, going for a light, I saw that one of the letters, he held in his hand, was directed to Lord Glenmore. Confused, I burnt mine, by holding it too near the candle.

Bidding William go with those he had, I said I could write the next day.

I know it is the height of folly to be thus discomposed by an incident, which ought not to affect me. True, Sir James Mitford told me he believed Miss Melville had refused Mr. Breusly. He must be mistaken; and Mrs.

Howard's information is correct; or why keep up a correspondence with him? My sister has frequently hinted at an attachment subsisting between Miss Melville, and Mr. Brensly; approved of too by Mrs. Melmoth.

Happy Brensly! to possess the affections of such a woman; and be sensible of her worth!

Little can you know of the human heart, if you suppose gratitude can ever be mistaken for the emotions of love. Tell me, Yorke, can the voice come with thrilling eloquence to the heart actuated by gratitude? Or can the touch from the hand of benevolence agitate the frame; animate the eye; and glow upon the cheek? If you can prove these symptoms to be effected by gratitude, I will bow to your superior judgement; and fearlessly cherish those ecstatic sensations, so necessary to my happiness.

But to return to the subject I was writing upon, when the direction of a

letter to Lord Glenmore crossed my imagination; and drew me from it.

Soon after dinner, Miss Melville joined us in the drawing room. Her countenance was serene, though serious: a tear, frequently trembling in her eye, indicated the affectionate feeling, she retained for the kindness formerly shewn her by the deceased Mrs. Caulfield.

The evening being fine, Miss Melville complied with our solicitations to walk. The air refreshed and restored her spirits sufficiently to enable her to converse.

"You must be very much surprised, Sir Charles, not to find Sir James and Lady Mitford at Melmoth House. And, had it not been for the illness of poor Mrs. Caulfield, we should have been at Dr. Syms's last week. It is altogether very unfortunate." To this I replied, that I should have been happy to have seen Sir James and Lady Mitford; but, excepting the illness and death of Mrs. Caulfield, I

was more gratified by meeting her at Melmoth House with the Syms's, than at Reading.

She civilly enquired after my sister, Mr. Howard, and Horace. I said I had not seen them since the day after I went to town.—"Had I been into Sussex?"—"I had not: but, after transacting some business in London. I went to Sunny Vale, which I had not seen for many years; that it was my intention to have proceeded to Pevensey, but letters from town obliged me to alter my plan, and return to London; that Mr. Howard and my sister being gone to Windsor, for a few days, I had no opportunity of seeing them."

Fearing she would take cold, I proposed going into the house. Dr. Syms soon after joining us, in his good humoured friendly way told Emily, he should recommend her retiring with the girls, for he was sure she required rest. She readily obeyed the hint; and we entered into

conversation respecting the funeral of Mrs. Caulfield, about which Miss Melville had requested Dr. Syms would consult me, and give the necessary directions. "As soon as that is over," said the Doctor, "Miss Melville will go to my house." "Why, my good sir, cannot your family take up your residence here?"

Scarcely had the absurd question escaped me, ere the folly of it smote me with confusion, increased by the arch smile, which accompanied his answer. "We will be careful of Miss Melville; and shall be happy to be honored with the company of Sir Charles Belmont, to make one of our little musical parties."—"It would give me great pleasure," I replied, "as I am passionately fond of music."

Now, I expect you to ask me, what I propose in thus exposing myself to danger. I fairly acknowledge my inability to develope my own motives; but an irresistible impulse impels me

to seek the society of the only woman, who can make me happy.

My whole mind is bewildered. I have not even come to any determination respecting my late aunt's possessions. Yet I suffer Miss Melville to leave Melmoth House. It is inconsistent I allow; but, had she continued here, she must have had some female friend to reside with her; and her fortune now amounting to scarcely the sixth part of that, which it was expected she would have, an opportunity is afforded of being convinced of the strength of Mr. Brensly's affection;—and most willingly will I relinquish her generous gift, if my retaining it is incompatible with her happiness.

Mrs. Howard will be violently offended by my being here; as I dare say she expected me to follow them to Windsor.

I think I have written you a tolerably long letter; but much doubt if you, who are not in love, will have patience to read it; therefore, leaving you to the trial, I conclude.

LETTER V.

MISS ASHBOURNE TO MISS MELVILLE.

Scarborough, June 26, 1812.

INDEED, my dear Emily, you are too severe upon poor Brensly. He is a delightful fellow. My father was very distant, at first, with this charming man, and, for several days after our acquaintance commenced; but, to my great joy, it has given place to more favorable sentiments; and I believe, the gallantry of Brensly, in saving me from a watery grave, has not a little contributed to this extraordinary change.

Yes!—Grave!—A party on the water was planned; and promised much pleasure to about fifteen young people, and three or four elders; without some of whom it would be in vain for me to accept any invitations whatever.

We were stowed in three boats, which kept as near together as was thought prudent. A boat, of larger dimensions, had been previously sent out, unknown to most of the party, with refreshments; and a band of music, which struck up, and most agreeably surprised and delighted us.

We remained on the water 'till the moon arose; when we had enjoyed so beautiful a sight for half an hour, it was thought adviseable to go on shore, which was lined with a concourse of people to hear the music, and see us land.

A young coxcomb in one of the other boats, who has often pestered me, was determined to assist me in landing. I was the last in our boat, except Mr. Brensly. Just as he had taken my hand, Nugent (my plague) leaped from his boat; came on the edge of ours; and, by his weight, upsetting it, we were all three plunged into the water. Whether the boat, or oars, struck my head, I know not;

but it is very uneasy; and is swelled on one side. Be that as it may, Brensly brought me, perfectly insensible, to shore in his arms. I think the sea water must have been almost boiling when I fell in, for I certainly felt an unusual degree of warmth towards my deliverer, when I returned to my senses; nor has its influence abated, though my dip was five days ago.

My good father cannot help acknowledging himself obliged to Mr. Brensly; for all concur in saying he saved my life at the hazard of his own.

I have felt myself a thousand times of more consequence since this affair; and, though a watery grave is not exactly what I aspire to, I would submit to a good ducking, at any time, to have such a delightful bustle made about me. The girls were quite deserted for my dripping ladyship. Horses, and carriages were put in requisition for Miss Ashbourne; though,

if one grain of sense was possessed by any individual of the group collected round me, they might have known, one conveyance, of any kind, would have been sufficient for me. But, though some of the party had scarcely twenty yards to walk, yet all, that possibly could, were huddled into carriages; one of which, from being too heavily laden, came gently to the ground.

A Venus, rising from the sea, is a compliment paid me in the print shops. I can only rejoice my last dying speech has not been cried about the streets. I am half in love with the puppy, who was the cause of my disaster, as you, Emily, may perhaps consider it; but (to me) it is the most delightful incident that could have happened to me.

Then it gives me such an opportunity of shewing the multitude, who choose to keep on their legs, how co descending I am, after plumping into the water a mortal, and coming

out a goddess, to notice such mere pieces of mortality.

The water was certainly warm.—Oh! how delightful are adventures!—I would half break my neck only to obtain such another. The very acme of my ambition is to be the topic of conversation. Of little consequence is it to me, from what cause it arises. One good, essential to my pleasureable sensations, I am sure of,—personal admiration.

Dear Emily, bear with me. I cannot control the exultations of my dancing heart: returned from a walk where my utmost vanity has been gratified by all that flattery can so charm our sex with;—to be followed by half a dozen fine fellows, with their languishing enquiries after my health, in tones so soft as if half dying themselves, that, to save them from fainting, I have half ruined myself in eau-de-luce to give them.

You know, I must not let my adorers die. The very children in the street,

follow me with, "That's the pretty lady, that was near being drowned!"

A trifle, which I keep in my ridicule for that purpose, I reward them with; and, by this small retaining fee, I am sure of keeping myself in their remembrance.

To-morrow evening I am going to a ball with the mother of the fop, who upset the boat. Now, my dear Emily, I have given you a description of the extatic pleasure, I have for several days enjoyed, I dare not read over what I have written; and anticipate your condemnation of poor me.

Your last letter threw me into a reverie, from which I was roused to attend the party going on the water. Why, child, if you were literally become that stupid animal, a good sort of body,—a wife, you could not be more circumspect in your out-goings and in-doings than you are as Emily Melville. Dear Scarborough is forbidden ground while that terrific mortal, Brensly, is here. Now, don't be

alarmed, Emily; he wont fly away with you, wicked and daring as you know him to be.

I hope you will be induced to relax from such a cruel determination; and, being now at liberty, I shall be very much hurt if you retain so unkind a resolution as not to visit any place where Mr. Brensly is. Suppose him married, now, only for arguments sake say; for instance,---married to Maria Ashbourne;---would you never come where we are, because my husband was once a lover of your's?—Alas! alas! I can make no such resolves; for I have had a hundred lovers; and have as often been in love myself; therefore if I should have any such delectable fancies, I must seek some solitary cave to hide me in. Even then, if my eyes have the brilliancy I am told they have, they would glitter through some crevice; and cause the unwary traveller to bite the dust.

Lord Glenmore and my father have recognized each other as fellow colle-

gians; and, in consequence, spend much of their time together. Brensly was the first to make this discovery; I was very much inclined to suspect their former acquaintance was the creation of his own brain, as he found my father not a little shy of him. I did not recollect, at the time, that my father saw his name on the subscription book at Bath; and you know, Emily, he is the most indefatigable creature living to bring about what he wishes; though his machinations did not succeed with you.

Indeed, Emily, I do believe he was, and I am half afraid he is, most seriously attached to you: and, but yesterday, he told me, the most fascinating charm, I possessed, was your friendship for me. If you don't admire his impudence, I expect you will my humility. It cost me a tear, though, I promise you, to be told I had no merit of my own. Brensly saw I felt the force of his reproof, for such he intended it to be, as I know he alluded

to my flirting with Nugent. He did not quite retract, but explained his meaning by saying Miss Melville's discrimination of character would not permit her to bestow her friendship where there was not intrinsic worth to recommend to so enviable a distinction. This was pronounced with a seriousness I did not think him capable of.

Heigh ho! I am half inclined to give up flirting; after to-morrow evening I will try what can be done. Now, if Brensly and myself should both reform and marry? That,—that will never do; we shall become perfect drones. I am resolved, if he reforms, I wont; the man would die in half a year from want of amusement. No, he shall have the credit of reforming me; or I will have the dear delightful task of making him the most attentive docile husband in the universe. This idea shall be my nightcap, that I may dream of the bliss of refor-

mation either to George Brensly, or your affectionate

MARIA ASHBOURNE.

LETTER VI.

HON. G. BRENSLY TO C. HOWARD.

Scarborough, June 26 1812.

INDEED, Howard, I am very sorry that your amiable Caroline continues in so precarious a state of health. Your anxiety on her account must be great. I sincerely hope you may both live many years to enjoy the happiness, to which her present situation promises so essentially to contribute by so unexpected an event.

We are still at Scarborough. That Maria Ashbourne is certainly entwining herself round my heart, though she is a confounded little flirt. Mr. Ashbourne had never been more than distantly civil, 'till an accident, that

befel his beloved daughter; and was nearly costing her, her life: I believe she would have been drowned, had I not been so fortunate as to save her; she was quite insensible when I brought her on shore.

On my life! Howard, the girls should wear more clothes; unless they intend to adopt the paraphernalia of the Hottentots. I declare, when I had Maria in my arms, she felt like a large fish; her thin muslin dress clinging so cold, and close to her.

We are not at this time quite such good friends as we were. I must cure her of that passion for universal admiration, before I venture to declare myself. I mortified her little ladyship at the last ball, a few evenings since, by not asking her to dance. She amply revenged herself upon me by the marked preference, she gave to the man, she knows I most disliked in the room; and the very puppy, who had well nigh drowned her. I dare not shew her I was displeased; therefore

I paid my respects to her and Mr. Ashbourne next morning. Only I took an opportunity of going there with two girls, who dispute the prize of beauty with her. I also went away with them, and walked for sometime on the sands in their company, though I anxiously wished to return to Mr. Ashbourne's.

My father is greatly taken with the arch playfulness of Maria; and has told me, if I think I can be happy with her, his consent shall follow my choice; and he will also enable me to make a handsome settlement.—I was rather taken by surprise. I could only thank his lordship for his kindness.

Mr. Ashbourne is of a very respectable family, and considerable property. This latter is generally the first consideration with most fathers; though I will do mine the justice to say his son's happiness has the pre-eminence in his mind.

I have entirely given up all thoughts

—hopes, I mean, of Miss Melville.—Fastidious in her opinions, she will never change them in my favor. Mr. Ashbourne speaks of her as of a darling child; and Maria with enthusiastic affection.

My father summons me to attend him to Mr. Ashbourne's. This is quite a new movement; for his lordship has not been out after eight o'clock since we have been here, though in the midst of summer. Surely they don't intend to take me by surprise, and marry us as the loyal people of England do their sovereigns! "You—shall marry—no matter whether you love, or dislike her; married you *shall* be, and we expect you to give a good example of conjugal affection, and fidelity to your, loving subjects."

Marry first, and love will come afterwards;—is a creed, that may do very well for princes, and princesses; but not for George Brensly. That love in perspective is not in my creed.

I must be sure of a little love before the finale to my freedom;—not being quite certain it will come afterwards. However, I will go, at all events. There—is a bride,—here is the bride-groom. There—is a parson, and perhaps a licence may be snug in his lordship's pocket: there let it rest 'till one of us forswear flirting. I am going;—going;—going.

Your tottering friend,

G. BRENSLY.

LETTER VII.

MISS MELVILLE TO MISS ASHBOURNE.

Melmoth House, July 29. 1812.

My dear Maria,

IF you love me, and have any regard for my happiness, I do entreat you not to have any more letters franked by Lord Glenmore to me. I

had rather pay treble postage, than have them franked by him; and this is the last I can bring myself to promise sending you in an envelope to his lordship. Oh! how do I wish dear Lady Mitford was returned! I cannot open my full heart to the Syms's, however good and amiable they may be: and your dear society, I foresee, I shall soon be precluded from enjoying for many years; if ever again. It is indeed a disappointment to me; but could I be assured such a separation was for my Maria's happiness, I would not repine. Too clearly do I now perceive to what point your good father's admonitions were directed; and so entirely do I coincide in his opinion of not living with a married friend, that every particle of his advice shall most religiously be observed by me.

I shuddered at the danger of my Maria, as I read your letter; nor did it subside by the description you gave of the vanity, and, pardon me if I add,

folly, betrayed by your excessive love of admiration; and that too, arising from your personal attractions. Alas! my beloved friend, we are all but too susceptible to this species of adulation. Reflect, I beseech you, how very transient is beauty;—destroyed by the merest accident. A fit of illness robs us of our bloom, and leaves us pale and sallow; the very reverse of what we were a few months, perhaps weeks, or days, since.

I expect you to laugh at my serious and earnest tones; and tell me, a young woman, under twenty-two, seldom declaims against beauty, unless she is ugly herself. But, Maria, you must recollect my having very recently witnessed the death of two aged friends, who in their youth, had as strong claims to admiration, as most of us; but would have had very little in their maturer years, if personal attractions only had been attended to: and with the most affectionate concern do I trace in almost every line of your

last letter, that your strong predilection for flattery has a tendency to absorb every fine feeling of your excellent heart; and your worthy father has scarcely a place in your letter, though you know how highly I revere every syllable that falls from the lips of that good man.

Reading.

I wrote to you in a former letter of Mrs. Caulfield's death; she was interred ten days ago, attended by Sir Charles, Dr. Syms, and all the household. The next day but one, I sent most of my little articles to the Doctor's.

Before I left Melmoth House, I visited all the pensioners. Sir Charles went with me. He would go; and a delightful walk we had there.

One very old man, almost blind, was sitting on a bench in the front of the house, to enjoy the sun, which was then declining. Sir Charles, kindly laying his hand on his shoulder, en-

quired after his health. "I don't know you, sir; but your's is the voice of compassion; and I am obliged to you: I am as well as usual. I have no wants; they have been kindly supplied by our good young lady; and she tells us, that Sir Charles, who is coming, is the best gentleman in the world; and will be very kind to us." Sir Charles looked at me; and smiling, said, "He was very much obliged to me." I replied, since he found he had so good a character, I thought he might venture to go into the house by himself.

In truth, I was afraid of what these poor grateful people might say in their loquacity;—nor was it without some reason; for, while I was hesitating, Mrs. Alfree, one of the pensioners, came out, in apparent distress. I enquired the cause. "Oh! dear madam, we have heard sad news today." I said, I hoped her son was safe, and well.—"Yes, madam, thanks to your goodness: he is very well off

now; but what has troubled us so much is, that we hear you be going into foreign parts; and to leave your poor pensioners." "Don't fear, Mrs. Alfree; Sir Charles will be equally kind to you." "That may be; but dear heart! madam, why should you go? We had settled it, that you should stay at the great house, and be my lady."

Luckily for me, Sir Charles was gone into the almonry; and, I hoped, did not hear the conclusion of Mrs. Alfree's arrangement.

For fear of a second part, I waited not till he came out; but turned to the path leading to Melmoth House. I had got down the hill, and just at the rise of the other, when I was overtaken by him.—"Miss Melville," he cried, "you don't use me fairly; I went into the house, expecting you were going in: you left me there, and ran away. I hope what Mrs. Alfree said did not cause your flight."

I was so agitated I could make no

reply; and what construction he put upon my silence I know not; but he dropped my hand, which he had taken, and appeared abstracted in thought.

Silently we walked on, for several minutes; when I was suddenly alarmed by a noise almost close to me. I started, and caught hold of his arm. Astonished by my doing so, delight and surprise animated his fine features; and pressing my hand in his;—"What induces you, Miss Melville, to seek protection from one, whom you so lately beheld with such chilling indifference?"—"I was alarmed by a noise in the plantation;" I replied. The rustling among the leaves increased, which proved to be occasioned by Mr. H. Howard endeavouring to force his way through. I attempted to withdraw my hand; but Sir Charles would not part with it, though he surely was very strange when I took his arm. I should consider his conduct as incomprehensible, had I not heard Mrs. Howard give those hints

of my being engaged to Mr. Brensly, which in some measure accounts for the inconsistency I cannot but observe, and regret.

Sir Charles enquired how long Mr. Horace had been arrived; and if any particular business had occasioned his return into Berkshire. "Only the fine weather. I frequently called in Grosvenor Street; and, not hearing of your return, concluded you were gone into Sussex. But, yesterday, a friend informed me, he met you near Reading. Being tired of father's, and mother's duets, I thought I would take myself off to Melmoth Park. On calling at the house, Mrs. M. Syms told me you were out walking. I had not far to seek you. I saw Miss Melville, and you were coming up the hill; so I thought I would hide myself, and surprise you."

If Sir Charles was surprised, he was not pleased. He still retained my hand; purposely, as I have since thought, that, when young Howard

returned to Windsor, he might have something to relate. That it did not escape his notice was evident, as he offered to take my other hand; observing, "Two supporters were better than one."

Soon after our return to the house, I requested the carriage might be ordered to carry Mrs. M. Syms and myself to Reading; the girls, and Lucy having gone there in the morning.

The time was now approaching, that required all the little fortitude, I possessed, to be summoned to my aid; that I might quit, with composure, a place where I had spent so many happy years; and where, 'till within a few months, I had scarcely ever known a sorrow.

The carriage being announced, Sir Charles conducted Mrs. M. Syms to it; and returned for me I trembled so excessively, on leaving the house, that I was in danger of falling, if he had not supported me. Almost as much agitated as myself, with diffi-

culty he articulated,—"Loveliest, best of women; happiness for ever be with you." And, pressing my hand to his lips;—"Excuse, and pardon my presumption.—We dine together at Dr. Syms's to-morrow." My tears could no longer be restrained. I waved my handkerchief, and drew up the window of the carriage.

I soon recovered; for my heart, though affected by an unfortunate passion, yet still yields me a satisfaction, which no human being can deprive me of.

In my next I will describe my new apartments; and how agreeably I was surprised by the gallantry of "Mine host."

E. M.

[redacted]

LETTER VII.

[redacted] TO MISS ASHCROFT.

[redacted], July 4, 1812.

THIS [redacted] is the third [redacted] at Dr. Syms's; [redacted] time I wrote to you, [redacted] arrived at their [redacted] as they were going to [redacted] partook of with them; [redacted] to my own apartments, [redacted] a good sitting room; [redacted] and a dressing room: [redacted] alluded to, was [redacted] them most ele- [redacted] knew they were [redacted] all I wished for; as, [redacted] Miss Caulfield's death, [redacted] to leave this neigh- [redacted] unexpectedly returning to [redacted]; and taking that

opportunity of seeing my late revered friends and pensioners.

Turning to Dr. Syms, who had followed, and was enjoying my surprise; —"My dear sir," I cried, "how could you put yourself to such an expense on my account?" Without answering me, he took a harp; and presenting it, asked me how I liked that instrument. —"I cannot tell, till I have tried it." —I just ran over the strings; and, in my life, never did I touch one with so sweet a tone.—"Surely, my dear sir, you are one of the good genii; and I am in an enchanted palace.—What is this?" (I asked) taking up an elegant work-box, made of tortoise-shell, with gilt edges; and so curiously constructed, that the lid appears to be but one shell; and, being transparent, all the divisions are visible, which contain the apparatus for work. This elegant toy gave me an idea, to whose attention I was indebted for such an addition to my comforts. A fine grand piano-forte very much delighted me,

as mine had become faulty. Every article of furniture was elegant, but not costly. The piano, and harp, only, are expensive. The good Doctor, taking my hand, said, "I hope, Miss Melville, you like your apartments, and admire my taste. I can see by your eyes you do, They are sad tell-tales; I would advise you to keep them shut, if you would avoid making any discoveries. These instruments must be tried to-morrow evening. I have invited two or three friends to make up a little concert, if it is agreeable to you." I replied, "I could have no objection to join in an amusement, that afforded me so much pleasure."

The next day, Sir Charles came to dinner; never was I less myself: he, too, appeared embarrassed. Whenever his fine eyes met mine, they expressed a tender solicitude, I could not understand, but which affected me, as if some heavy calamity awaited me. —How reprehensible is it to indulge in such painful chimeras!

The gentlemen soon followed us to the drawing room, now distinguished as mine. I took the first opportunity of thanking Sir Charles for his attention in improving the appearance, as well as comfort, of my apartments. "To the goodness of your disposition alone am I indebted for the approbation, my dear Miss Melville, you are pleased to express of the very little I have hitherto done to deserve it. You will, I trust, on some future occasion, enable me to prove how ardently I wish to promote your happiness, in which I am not destined to form a part."—Was ever any one situated as I am! I will candidly own, I prefer Sir Charles Belmont to any man I ever saw; and have sometimes flattered myself, I was not an object of indifference to him; but, whatever his words, in this instance, may imply, any serious intention towards me, beyond that of friendship, is not to be thought of; and I cannot refrain from being rather hurt, that he should resort

to a degree of duplicity not at all in character with his sincerity, and candour, upon every other occasion. When he addresses his conversation to me, his voice is peculiarly soft; and his manner is so fascinating, and so fixes my attention, I am almost insensible of any other person being in the room.

I must exert myself to subdue a partiality, I am sensible, must ultimately injure my health and spirits. Sir Charles tells me,—"He is not destined to form a part of my happiness."—He certainly has discovered my too favorable sentiments of him, and has thus informed me, I must not indulge such a fallacious hope, as that of being united to him. Yet, at times, how tenderly attentive!—It is natural to him to be so; and my own self-love has deluded and deceived me. I am convinced that Mrs. Howard's insinuations, respecting my being engaged to Mr. Brensly, had no effect upon her brother; and it is a great satisfaction to me, that no measures were adopted

to undeceive him. Oh! what an indelicate conviction of my prepossession would that have led to!

My mind was so entirely occupied by one subject, that, when requested to play in the evening, I never was less capable of complying with the wishes of my friends; nor ever played so ill. Mrs. Newland; her two daughters, elegant young women; her son; and Sir William Graham, were of the party. Dr. Syms is an excellent performer on the violin: Sir Charles played the violincello; Miss Newlands the piano; Sir William and Mr. Newland on the flute; and I took the harp. We had some delightful songs from Miss Newland, and her brother. Sir Charles pressed me to sing. I felt myself unequal to such an exertion, and begged to be excused. I was vexed with myself afterwards, as I have no doubt he will attribute it to chagrin from what had passed after dinner.

Young Howard is more disagreeable than ever; and was so excessively

troublesome to Miss Eliza Newland; that Sir Charles left the room, and sent for his nephew. I think he gave him a good lecture; as he behaved very well the remainder of the evening, though Mrs. Newland did not include him in the invitation she gave Sir Charles to dine at her house the following day.

How strange does it appear to me to consider Dr. Syms's as my home! If Sir James and Lady Mitford were returned, I think I should feel very differently.

I have written several long letters since I heard from you; but if an union takes place between Mr. Brensly and the friend of my heart, our confidential correspondence will cease to be so voluminous; having little to communicate that would be interesting to a husband, who probably may set too high a value on my Maria's time to permit such a privation of it from himself. One subject only is precluded from his perusal; and which in future

I must forbear employing my pen upon.

My good Evans continues at Bath. Lucy improves. Having a good disposition, and being grandaughter to poor old Jeffery, I wish to keep her with me, though her ignorance often distresses me.

LETTER IX.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO MAJOR YORKE.

Melmoth House, August 26. 1812.

MELMOTH House being deserted by its fairest, brightest ornament, I range about this immense building in quest of what is not to be found within its walls.—Happiness, and Emily, are fled, never to return, but as a transitory ray from the bright orb, which sometimes gladdens our hearts amidst the winter blast. I feel the place a dreary solitude, and

wander from room to room, my watch ever in my hand; sometimes listening to its ticking, suspecting it does not go; so heavily does time pass on 'till the hour arrives that we meet again.

Our evenings have generally been spent in musical parties. Emily plays the harp with exquisite taste. Last evening, for the first time, she accompanied the instrument with her voice, allowing me to join with her on the violincello. Believe me, when she sung, for some seconds I was so entranced by her heavenly strains, that I made a most miserable business of it. I was really ashamed of exposing myself, as I did. I recovered, and accompanied her in a duet. Oh! how in every way does she excel in feminine accomplishments!—I say *feminine*, because Miss Melville is no horse-woman; she is too timid to acquit herself with her usual grace, and ease; she sits well; but is afraid to ride faster than a foot pace.

With inexpressible pain do I observe

that her behaviour to me is more distant than ever. Oh! did she know, or could she be sensible, of the pain she gives to one, who so truly loves her, I am sure, though she could not, consistently with her attachment to another, encourage the passion, which is visible to every one but herself, yet the friendly familiarity, which has subsisted between us, might still continue, without giving offence to the fortunate Brensly.

I cannot but think it very strange he has not been here since the death of Mrs. Melmoth. I suppose it is an arrangement of their own not to claim her hand 'till her mourning expires. Yet Miss Melville has left off her mourning; therefore that cannot be the cause; no doubt, but he will be here soon.

The neighbourhood of Reading is very respectable. Mrs. Newland, a lively widow of about forty, with two amiable girls, her daughters; and a son, who is lately entered at college, and

Sir William Graham, a visitor to the Newlands, are almost one family with the Syms's, being nearly related to Mrs. Syms.

To give you an idea of Melmoth House is not difficult. It is a heavy stone building, that has very much the appearance of an hospital, or manufactory. The front door opens into a spacious saloon. A dining room on the right; and a handsome well furnished library on the left. Three windows in each of these. Over these are four rooms; two of which are drawing rooms, communicating with each other by folding doors. The third is a museum. A bed room finishes the front. The gable ends are appropriated for dressing rooms to the back bed rooms; and are of very moderate dimensions. A gallery extends from one end of the house to the other. The rooms over those I have mentioned, would be sufficient for the accommodation of a moderate family; but there is a communication to another

part that contains more than the main house. The stair-case is lighted by a large sky-light, put up lately by my aunt. The museum I keep duly locked; or that monkey, Horace, would destroy the half of its contents. He is in mischief now, for I hear the glass of the sky-light shivering to pieces.

In continuation.

To follow that puppy, Horace Howard, did I leave my letter unfinished on Tuesday; and shall now send a whole packet together, containing the events and incidents of four days.

Since the crash of the sky-light, has this mischievous youth endangered the life of the most exalted woman in being.

The Newlands prevailed on Miss Melville to ride with them. I was returning on horseback from Bracknell, when I saw, and joined them. A heavy cloud, with distant thunder, portended a coming storm; and the New-

land party were bent on hastening home. I remained with Miss Melville, who pushed on faster than she would have done, if I had listened to her persuasions, and left her with the servant. A leveret crossed the road. Horace threw his hat, and frightened Miss Melville's horse, which ran away with her; and, though not excelling as a horse-woman, she kept her seat for a considerable time. At last, overcome by fright, the reins dropped from her hand. Luckily the horse stopped; and I was in time to receive this lovely burthen in my arms, without any other injury than what was occasioned by alarm. She had fainted. I pressed her to my distracted bosom, scarcely sensible myself, but of the certainty of enfolding in my arms the dearest treasure of my heart. I ordered Horace immediately to quit the scene of mischief; and bid William go for the carriage. My beloved Emily still continued insensible; and the rain was falling in heavy drops. With every

tender epithet did I call upon her. From a rivulet I had procured a little water in my hat, with which I sprinkled her face; and rubbing her hands, she at length began to recover.

How sweetly did her eyes thank me, before the powers of articulation were restored. Releasing herself from my arms, she said she thought she could walk. The rain now began to pour down in torrents. I spied a little shed, to which I almost carried the dear girl; and soon after the carriage arrived.

Oh! that Brensly may feel the tender solicitude for this inestimable woman, that seems interwoven with my very existence! Still am I all amazement that he has not been here. No misunderstanding can have arisen, as they frequently correspond. Certainly we do not all feel alike in similar situations; and, though I have considered Miss Melville as engaged, I deem those moments lost, which are not spent in her society.

I am aware you will condemn my apparent capriciousness; and with good reason; as I candidly confess, did Emily transfer her affection to me, she would sink in my esteem, as no longer deserving that tender regard, which has daily increased ever since I became acquainted with her.

A jilt, or a flirt I despise, as having no discrimination in the object of their favor; bestowing kindness, and receiving attentions from any man, that falls in their way. The man of worth not more regarded, than him, whose conduct is disgraceful; and whose particular attentions ought to be shunned, instead of encouraged, as we too frequently see they are.

What am I doing?—is a question, that forces itself perpetually upon me, as I am preparing to go to Dr. Syms's. And when I lean over her chair in rapturous enthusiasm, as her fingers swiftly strike the cords of her harp, accompanied by her melodious voice, I have not power to retire, 'till I find myself the last of the party.

Reflecting on moments of pleasure, reason tells me I am ruining my own peace of mind, and perhaps undermining that of the woman I adore.

Since the accident, I mentioned, I have thought she sees, and pities my sufferings: and, under that persuasion, I am going into Kent; and probably into Sussex:—a resolution I formed the evening after Emily's horse ran away with her. And I think you will allow me some credit for my self-denial.

Yet the incident, which gave rise to my self-examination, and consequent determination to leave Berkshire, was that, which overwhelmed me with sensations of delight, such as my heart had long been a stranger to.

The pleasure of seeing her quite recovered made my spirits unusually gay. The little circle too seemed to participate in the safety of one, endeared to them by her sweet disposition, and engaging manners. Emily too appeared gratified by my tender assi-

duities; and, on taking leave of her, while pressing her hand involuntarily to my heart, I thought she returned the pressure; but so gently, so delicately, that none but those, who love as I do, could have been sensible of the tremulous motion. Delighted, enraptured at the moment, my eyes dwelt on her lovely countenance, covered with blushes, as if conscious of too favorable sentiments; and of giving hopes to one man, when her hand was engaged to another.

The ecstacy, with which I entered my carriage, forsook me before I alighted at Melmoth House. Revolving in my mind the precipice I was standing on; that, perhaps, I was seducing the affections of a woman, whose engagement to another ought to be held as sacred, as if already married, I took myself severely to task; nor did the lovely Emily stand excused for not repelling those attentions, she had this evening encouraged by that bewitching softness, and evident plea-

sure, with which she had received them. Her behaviour is most cruel, if not intended to express her approbation; but, if she really does wish me to be attached to her, how little is woman's affection to be depended upon!

A restless night have I past, harrassed by conjecture; and am now writing to you while my servants are preparing for my departure.

That you will exclaim violently at my inconsistency I expect. Good right have you to do so; as it is but a few days since I was miserable from the distance I thought Miss Melville observed towards me. Yet the moment she seems inclined to return my passion, I fly from her. Twenty times have I written a farewell note to Emily; and, as often, torn it to pieces. I have at last concluded one to Dr. Syms.

If I can keep my resolution, I shall leave Berkshire without going through Reading, that I may not be diverted from my purpose. To have seen, perhaps for the last time, the woman

whom my soul adores, oh! I must not reflect! All my good resolves will vanish, and tempt me again to join the circle at Dr. Syms's.

Adieu, my friend. Wish me to conquer the greatest enemy to man—*self*.

C. BELMONT.

LETTER X.

MISS ASHBOURNE TO MISS MELVILLE.

Scarborough, August 27, 1812.

IF I should marry, Emily, never write a letter crammed full of your old fashioned notions of—*love*, *honor*, and *obey*; you would ruin half the good husbands in his majesty's united kingdoms.

You seem to think a husband may inspect a wive's letters with impunity. No! believe me! not a line shall he ever read of your's, or any other friend.

The next freak would be; I must make my courtesy, and say, "Pray, sir, what gloves are you pleased I should wear?" No! no! My spirits are mountains high at this moment; and, if a nunnery were near, I should be tempted to throw myself into it.

That Brensly will make me frantic. Two balls have I been at since I wrote to you, at neither of which did I dance with him; he never asked me, and assumed the indifference of a total stranger. However I was even with him. I laughed; chatted; and danced away, with the man, of all others, I know he most dislikes.—That he was not insensible to this, I was convinced, by the look of contempt he gave me. Contempt! did I say? Oh! let me blot it from my recollection, that I should excite so unamiable a sensation in the man, I—I—I had almost said,—I loved.

My spirits kept up tolerably well in the ball room; but, ah! Emily, what were my feelings, when I retired

from all the flattery, and folly of the preceding evening. No longer the giddy girl, who, to mortify the man of her heart, rendered herself contemptible not only to him, but half the company there.

Mrs. Lucas talked very seriously to me this morning; and, I fear, intends giving her opinion to my father, that I may not trifle with my own happiness. Oh! she need not take that trouble; for I am too seriously aware of the brink, on which I stand, to step one inch farther; and having written myself into so condescending a frame of mind, I really believe, if Brensly were here at this moment,—this very moment, and sued for pardon, I should be inclined to grant it.

Perhaps you would think I ought to ask his, if you knew all my offences. No! no! that will never do! I cannot, so easily, descend to mortality as that, neither.

Heigh ho! suppose Brensly deserts me. Deserts me! did I say? Burn!

thou treacherous pen, for writing a sentence so terrific!---If he goes,—let him do so. I will be no smiler upon a monument, I can assure him. Who was that ridiculous poet, that broached such an absurd idea? O! I believe it was the same comical old bard, that makes the ungallant Hamlet bid the fair Ophelia go to a nunnery.

As I observed before, I am no monument-smiler. I am the very reverse. For, as long as I live, I will laugh with the gay; and weep with the sorrowful. Ah! that love makes sad havock amongst us lovely, and loving damsels.

My good father has got some crotchet in his head; what, I cannot divine. Lord Glenmore, and he, are become sworn friends and cronies. Something was in agitation a few evenings since; and my father said, he expected Lord Glenmore, and his son, to drink tea with us. I was quite astonished at this intimation, as his lordship is afraid to encounter the evening

air. I own, I was not a little delighted too at the prospect of this sociable meeting. I formed, and unformed, several airs and graces, to be displayed upon the occasion; intending to charm both father and son. I practised Brensly's favorite song;—put on the bracelets he admires;—dressed my hair in the way he had said was most becoming to me, often looking in the glass, 'till I almost persuaded myself, I was very plain and ordinary. My patience was nearly exhausted, when a storm of hail beat upon the windows; and a single knock at the door to inform us, his lordship could not venture abroad.—I did rather expect Mr. Brensly would come, if the weather changed, which it did soon. In this too, I was disappointed.

I told my father, as I could not go out for admiration, and no one would come to us, I expected that he would make himself very agreeable. I danced, and practised my steps before him; and he laughed at my fooleries.

"Now, my dear father," I cried, "you should be all admiration, and make extravagantly fine speeches. Come, I will write down a few sentences;—what you should say."—"My dear girl has not a more sincere admirer than her father. Your sweet playful vivacity is enchanting to me, who feel, and know, the value of my Maria's heart."—"Bravo!"—"But, my love, you have faults."—"That is not in the paper, I gave you, sir."—"No my dear, it need not, for it is legible in your countenance."—"My dear sir, you quite frighten me."—"Have you and Mr. Brensly disagreed, Maria?"—"No, sir; only we are not quite such good friends as we were."—"May I ask, from what cause?"—"Certainly! but I am ashamed to tell you, it was so ludicrous. I am not in the least to blame, I assure you."—"Indulge me then, my dear, with the recital."—"You wont have patience to hear it; and, I declare I did very little to provoke him."—"Pro-

voke him, Maria; I don't understand you."—"Don't look at me so, papa; and I will tell you exactly the whole affair. I think it was last monday;—Mr. Brensly's entrance, like that of an eastern lover, was preceded by a present.—"A bribe!" I cried to myself: I will punish him for thinking so meanly of me.—After the usual enquiries—"Give me leave, Miss Ashbourne, to present you with a box of colours, which I can venture to recommend. I believe you will find them superior to those, you have been using." "Thank you, sir, for informing me that my drawings are ill done. I have laid aside my pencil;—am tired of the amusement."—Unfortunately for Mr. Brensly's present, the morning, you know, sir, being damp and cold, we had a fire;—the box, with its contents, was in an instant committed to the flames. I believe he expected me to make an effort to save it, as it was very beautiful. I made no such attempt; but, catching up Carlo, held him erect, to warm his paws

by the blaze. Brensly became quite outrageous; and paced the room, with such hasty and loud strides, that I begged him to desist, as it really affected my nerves. This gentle request ought to have had a good effect. Instead of which, he began to expostulate; and, I dare say, was prepared to give me a catalogue of my offences, when the servant announced Mr. Nugent. Brensly flew out of the room with such velocity, that he overset Mr. Nugent, and threw him down several stairs. His nose coming in contact with Mr. Brensly's finger and thumb, lost some blood; the sight of which alarmed the poor fellow, and he came bleeding into the room, and weeping like a child. I rang for assistance. You, sir, was gone to the bath. Mr. Nugent was however not much hurt: his coat was his greatest grief. "That friend of your's, Miss Ashbourne, is quite a brute; he darted at me like a tiger. I could not escape his fury!---never made the least

apology:—quite spoilt my coat:—came down but last night."—"Call him out," I cried.—"What! set my life against a madman? I know better than that."—"A scar would be a wonderful improvement (I said) just across your forehead. Look in the glass. Those eye brows, if a little lowered, would be a great advantage to your face.—"And do you think, madam, I will be scalp'd to please you?"—"To be sure you would. Have you not a hundred times declared, you would sacrifice your life to obtain my favor? And what is a scar, in comparison of life?"—"My coat can never be worn again; confound the"—"Hush, Mr. Nugent; he may hear you." In a fright, the puppy took his leave;—and so ends my tale."

"Which, my dear thoughtless girl, I disapprove of, throughout the whole; and I must enjoin you not to admit visitors again in my absence. Both these gentlemen saw me going to the

bath. I will make no other comment; but leave it to your own good sense to decide upon the propriety of my request. And will only endeavour to convince you that, if you think seriously of Mr. Brensly, you must conquer that too great propensity for the admiration of those unmeaning coxcombs, for ever fluttering about you." "Mr. Brensly is," I replied, "as much a votary to vanity and folly, as myself; therefore he is the last, who should consider that as a fault in me, which he practices himself."—"The very reverse, my dear girl, will you find it. To return the affection of such a man, as Mr. Brensly, and retain his, when you are his wife, all your playful vivacity, amusements, attention to your dress, improvement of those accomplishments, he now admires,—all must be directed to please him; and him only."—"Cease, cease, my dear father: what a horrible husband have you made of poor Brensly. You never liked him; that *fit-ting* it into Mrs.

Belmoth's carriage will never be forgiven."—"It is true that that occurrence did not serve to recommend him; and I did not conceive that you would very soon forget it. I candidly own that Mr. Brensly was not the man, I should have chosen for my Maria. And I as freely acknowledge, that he has very much improved upon acquaintance; and his attention to his father has great weight with me, I assure you. For I cannot think the heart of a young man radically ill disposed, who will forego the pleasurable society of the young, as he frequently does, to amuse his invalid parent."

Now really, Emily, if I were to regulate my conduct by your's, and my father's advice, reproof, remonstrance, and wise reprehensions, I should be a desirable wife for no earthly being, but some poor old soul, both deaf, and blind. If you know of such a one in Berkshire, pray secure him for me: recommendation will be of no avail to one, who can neither hear nor see.

Let me recollect what is expected of me.—I am to hate,—yes to hate, all those, whom Brensly looks askew at; and love all those he loves; myself included, I suppose, in this act of grace. What else am I to do? O! help me out, Emily; or I shall misbehave.

If the fellow begins to lord it over me now, though we have not yet arrived at that article in love's grammar, —"I love;"—"you love;" how will it be when in shrill notes we cry, "I *don't* love;"—"you *don't* love."

Again do I repeat it, Brensly will make me frantic, what with thinking right, and acting wrong, I am miserable. I will reform;—I think, I am determined upon that. "Oh! don't come near me, you wretch! I cannot abide you! Don't you see I am engaged? You may take yourself off. I am going to reform; and will not speak to, or look (if I can help it) at a fop, or fopling, this half hour. No! no touching hands! keep your distance; and be off!"

There, Emily, I have packed off that puppy Nugent: come; that is one step towards--- As I live, there is Brensly in the street. I wonder if he was watching Nugent, or me. I rejoice I did not suffer him to stay. I am sure Brensly must know, I am at home.—Perhaps he will call.—How do I look to day? but shabby! had little sleep last night; and when I did go into a nap, dreamed Brensly was walking with Theodosia Faulkland on his arm. For fear he should call, I will just make a little alteration in my dress.

I am provoked; vexed to the heart, Emily; and, if I did not think it would make my eyes red, I would indulge a few tears. What is that blot? A tear, I declare; no more; no more! I will reflect on the pleasure I have this morning given my dear father. by proposing to invite Mrs. Lucas to spend a few weeks with us; as the time is expired, she engaged her lodgings for, and she can get no others. She is a

very sensible agreeable woman. The satisfaction this has given my father shall drive every unpleasant thought from

Your ever affectionate

M. ASHBOURNE.

LETTER XI.

MISS MELVILLE TO MISS ASHBOURNE.

Reading, August 21, 1812.

My dear Maria,

YOU, and good Mr. Ashbourne, will be pleased to hear, that Lady Mitford is returned from Ireland, after an absence of three months. Two sweet interesting girls, her neices, are with her. I have but little opportunity for confidential communication with my revered friend; and on the subject, nearest my heart, I never can enter, unless Lady Mitford is more particular in her enquiries, than I think she is likely to be.

Sir Charles Belmont is gone from Melmoth House. A note to Dr. Syms, this morning, informing him that business of importance obliged him to depart at so early an hour, as must prevent him from calling to take leave before he left Berkshire; hoping I would continue my kind attentions to the pensioners, as usual; and requesting me to make use of whatever I might consider as likely to contribute either to my own pleasure, or comfort; or that of my friends.

Isabella came almost breathless into my room, this morning, before I was up. "Dear Miss Melville," she cried, "Sir Charles Belmont is gone."—"Has he been here?" I asked. "No, madam, he is gone quite; left Melmoth House very early this morning; and has written a note to papa."

I had a little cold, which I pleaded as an excuse for having my breakfast brought to me. Mr. or Mrs. Howard perhaps is ill; or he may be called away, as he says, upon business of

importance. I know Sir Charles has expected to be sent to Spain.

Surely he might have written a few lines to me. There could be no impropriety in his doing so. His conduct is enveloped in such mystery as is impenetrable to me.

But two days ago I met with an accident. I fell from my horse. Sir Charles caught and saved me from injury. I had fainted. How long I continued insensible I know not; but the tender solicitude of his whole behaviour, during the effects of fright, and for the remainder of the day, could not be exceeded by the tenderest lover. My spirits were too much elated to suffer me to sleep; and with pleasure unutterable did I repeat to myself every kind expression that had escaped him during my recovering from my fainting. It could not be assumed by him, or ideal in me. Some cause, past my comprehension, actuates him. Vanity is not a ruling passion in Sir Charles Belmont; and this species of vanity,

in particular, he holds in detestation, which impels too many, of both sexes, to gain the affections of those, for whom they feel not the smallest regard, farther than as they may contribute to their consequence in the circle, in which they move.

Your letter, my dear Maria, is this moment come to hand. Oh! how grateful to my heart are a few of the last lines. Believe me, my dear girl, I did not allude to you or Mr. Brensly, when I wrote the above. Persons of that description are so numerous that it is not necessary to make any of our friends, or acquaintance, sit for the picture. I do intreat you, my dearest friend, to attend to the advice of your excellent father. He has knowledge of the world; has studied the human heart; and kindly makes allowances for the errors of youth and inexperience: and, no doubt, he has discovered Mr. Brensly's true character,—that it is volatile, not vicious.

I am ready to admit it as an excuse,

though a very, very poor one, that the seeing me only with a young female, tempted him to gratify the whim of the moment, without reflecting upon consequences. Had my good discreet Evans been with me, I think he would have desisted. Thus, Maria, do we find life chequered with pleasure and pain, like flowers and weeds, which spontaneously grow in the fields, yet bounteous providence has appointed both to be beneficial to his creatures.

The friendly Syms's are extremely kind and attentive to me. You are greatly mistaken in Mrs. Syms; her delicate health prevents her appearing to advantage in society: her disposition is naturally cheerful, but many untoward circumstances, as well as ill health, have rendered her nervous. You are not aware she is the youngest daughter of the late Lord Stanford; and eloped with Dr. Syms, when he was a student at Edinburgh. Lord Stanford found it convenient to retain

the appearance of a resentment, he never felt, as his finances would not allow him to give any fortune to his children. He was even reduced so low before he died, that he owed his support to the contributions of his friends; and Mrs. Syms has never had more than two thousand pounds, though the daughter of a Nobleman. She is a very sweet woman; and treats me with maternal tenderness. Sir James and Lady Mitford returned too! Oh! I shall be rich in friends. Whom then shall I envy while possessing such real blessings? May I ever deserve their kindness; is devoutly wished by,

Your ever affectionate

E. MELVILLE.

LETTER XII.

HON. G. BRENSLY TO C. HOWARD.

Scarborough, Sept. 1, 1812.

My dear Friend,

WE are still at Scarborough. That little vixen, Maria Ashbourne, is paying me off for all my old offences. The very devil of a flirt: and I had made up my mind to quit the pursuit of one so volatile. She has veered about, and taken fresh hold of me. I plainly saw she held me at defiance. I treated her with contempt, which to a sensible mind was not to be borne; but she kept it up, notwithstanding, 'till, on leaving the ball room, I caught her eye, in which a tear stood trembling. Precious drop! that endeared thee, Maria, to a heart, which was on the point of

quitting thee for ever; and I was almost fool enough to follow her. Luckily I was wanted in the dance, which was now become uninteresting, as there was no one I wished to please, or teaze, in the remaining assemblage of stupid sameness.

Maria Ashbourne, with all her faults, is superior to most girls in the age we live in; and, as for those of former times, or those, who are to succeed us, let the former rest, and the others come, it is no concern of mine.

The tearful eye of Maria clung to my heart; and, irresolute whether I should call there, I so far conquered my inclination as to keep quietly in the house when my father summoned me, as I told you in my last letter, to attend him to Mr. Ashbourne's.

To my great relief, we were prevented going by a violent storm of hail. I was confoundedly shaky 'till the hail stones come pelting on my head, as I was waiting to assist his lordship to the carriage. I don't hear

of any more expeditions; so I hope our papas will keep at a respectful distance, 'till Maria and I shall allow them to chuckle over their hopeful progeny.

I have placed my man James on a hill, which overlooks Mr. Ashbourne's. He answers the purpose of a telegraph to me, by watching the port of Rose Cottage, so is the house of my charmer called; and even from my window, by his means, I can discover a man of war, or a privateer, going to attack my little frigate. If I ever become a benedict, that fellow James shall pack off positively; he is too well educated for me as a married man. Knowing his most useful qualifications, I might perhaps be tempted to profit by them, after I have promised to be hoodwinked for the rest of my life.

The day after the civil hail storm, I wandered into the street; saw Nugent, my detested rival, enter Mr. Ashbourne's. Not five minutes however did he continue there, though I knew Maria

was at home. I resolved to keep away, and not disturb the fair penitent. Were you to see Nugent, you would despise me, for suffering myself to be annoyed by his attentions; and her, for encouraging such a coxcomb.

I wonder what I weighed when I came to Scarborough; for what with scrambling up the hills in the heat of the day, and dancing in the evening in a room crowded like the black hole in Calcutta, I think I must be pretty well reduced. There never was such a place for dancing. I begin to be tired of this manœuvering to torment a girl, who I think loves me; but, as little boys are told, when smarting under the discipline of a fellow six feet high,---it is for their good, though he has all the trouble.

Howard, I am heartily ashamed of the life I have been leading ever since I left college;---quite a useless member of society;---no one pursuit that is laudable, or that I can reflect upon with the least degree of satisfaction to

myself; the hours spent in reading to and with my father excepted. Though I am not idle, my time is spent in frivolous amusements. That I may no longer continue so despicable a character, I have it in contemplation to study the law, that I may be able to fill the useful office of a magistrate respectably: and, without a competent knowledge of the laws of my country, I will never attempt administering to others, what I do not understand myself. The having some one to stand behind me, like a prompter at a theatre, would be too mortifying to me to be endured. This scheme of mine requires some cogitation, before I can absolutely decide on its execution.

Kind remembrance and good wishes to your Caroline.

LETTER XIII.

HON. G. BRENSLY TO C. HOWARD, ESQ.

Scarborough, Sept. 6, 1812.

MARIA has at length conquered, and I have confessed myself her slave. We have had a pretty sharp contest; and, though I am subdued, I have obtained a victory, and, as most of our disagreements, if they will bear that appellation, have originated in public, where her love for the admiration of fools disgusted me, so has our cessation of hostilities been produced by a different conduct in this little syren. A ball was given by Mrs. Lucas, a respectable and amiable friend of Mr. Ashbourne. Maria came after the dancing had begun; she looked superlatively charming. Nugent, I believe, thought so too; for he solicited the honor of

dancing with her, the moment she entered the room. I heard her say it was not her intention to dance; if she did, she was engaged. I wondered to whom she was engaged. Nugent kept aloof for some time: but, not willing to relinquish so desirable a partner, he made another attempt to engage her. She was firm in her refusal. A lady rising to join the dance, I took her seat. Capt. Stanly next requested the honor of her hand; the same answer, that she was engaged, if she danced. I chatted with her; but did not ask her to dance with me, and left her, to keep my engagement with a Mrs. Mackintosh,—a widow, sprightly and young, with a fine jointure and pretty person. She assumes all the airs of a woman of quality, being herself a shred of nobility, though her husband was one of those, whom nobody knows. She has done me the honor to distinguish me in a manner, that would be highly flattering to most men, but I had rather seek, than be

sought; and I took the first opportunity of a vacant seat by Maria, whose beautiful eyes kept pace with my movements, and had an expression in them that went to my very heart, whenever they met mine, which was but seldom; as she evidently kept them in as good order as possible; and it was only inadvertently they encountered mine.

Tired of this warfare, I declined dancing any more, and took my station by her, resolved to continue there the remainder of the evening. I now expected to find myself quite at my ease; but never was I less so in my life; and I believe my apparent embarrassment communicated itself to my lovely neighbour, as she appeared, too, rather confused. I fancy we were both very ridiculous; nor could I think of any subject, on which to converse, though, not ten minutes before, I thought I had a thousand things to say to her. Taciturnity is seldom the order of the day, either with Maria or

myself; and, on supper being announced, our risibility was excited, and we both laughed heartily at our own folly. I did not part with Maria, but placed myself next her; and we separated, I am persuaded, much more happy than we met in the evening.

The next morning I called at Mr. Ashbourne's; and, finding Maria alone, made her a serious offer. She wickedly replied, "I suppose you expect me to make you flaming promises, and perhaps find security for my good behaviour. As for the first, I shall make none; and for the other, no one will be mad enough to take upon them so hazardous a charge."—"I will, my dear girl; and, by this dear hand, I vow to make you so good a husband, that you never shall have cause to repent your choice."—"This is all very fine talking, Mr. Brensly; and I am willing to take you with all your faults. I shall try your patience so I advise you to provide a sufficient stock;

that will not be exhausted. Let me consider—for a year or two; and, after that, if you are not quite out of luck, you may have the satisfaction of seeing me a quiet domestic animal, that will not give you much trouble in future."

Her father coming in prevented my making a reply; and, I then requested Mr. Ashbourne's consent to my visits as an accepted lover. The worthy man smiled; but shaking his head, as he took Maria's hand, and kindly placed it in mine, said, "Mr. Brensly, you have my consent, and, in bestowing the hand of this dear girl, I give you that of a kind and dutiful daughter; it will depend upon you to make her a good wife. Her heart I believe has long been yours, notwithstanding those flights, which have often given me pain. I own I have my fears that there is too great a similitude in the faulty part of your characters for happiness, unless you both endeavour to correct your own failings, without adverting to those of each other by way of excuse for your

errors. Lord Glenmore's approbation I have no doubt of, or I should not so readily have given mine."—"Upon my honor, papa," cried Maria, "you seem as glad to get rid of me, as if Mr. Brensly was the first bidder for your giddy girl." The delighted father caught his beloved daughter in his arms, and kissed her cheek, while the tears of tender affection stole down his own. Maria hid her face on the bosom of her father. I could not resist the tender impulse, but, folding both in my arms, gently pressing Maria towards me. "Your father, my sweet girl, sanctions the kiss of affection;" and kissing her ruby lips, I led Mr. Ashbourne to his chair.

Never in my life did I pass an hour of such pure delight; and, on my return home, I informed my father of the cause of my absence, and apparent happiness, at which his lordship was pleased to express much satisfaction. I am now become a constant visitor at the cottage, though I have begun to

study the law, as I hinted in my last:—a resolution, by the bye, first formed at the suggestion of my father, who has it in his power materially to assist me, having been bred to the bar himself, and even practiced the law for some years; but, three deaths happening in the family, he very unexpectedly succeeded to the estate and title of Glenmore.

This long letter has been many days in hand; nor must you expect to be indulged again while I am at Scarborough; and, when I am married, I hope I shall not have any incidents to relate, but have you and your dear Caroline to witness the happiness of your friend,

G. BRENSLY.

LETTER XIV.

MISS MELVILLE TO MISS ASHBOURNE.

Reading, Sept. 16, 1812.

My dear Maria,

IN my last, I informed you of Sir Charles Belmont having left Melmoth House suddenly; and I could not help acknowledging I was a little mortified that he did not write a few lines to take leave of me. I am now in perfect astonishment at the strange letter I have this morning received from him. He is at Sunny Vale, and expecting to go abroad.

I enclose his letter for your perusal. If he does not forbid my answering it, he expresses himself in a way that makes me feel it impossible to write to him, without appearing to solicit a correspondence. I do not now flatter

myself with the most distant conception of his feeling any thing more than friendship for me.

Spare me, dear Maria. He is the first, and only man, for whom I ever felt more than friendship. Oh! did you know this most amiable of men, I should stand acquitted in your opinion of being too easily captivated. From every one I hear his praises. Some extol his goodness; some remark the involuntary homage every where paid him as a sort of superior creature. His manners so fascinating; his knowledge of the world; his general information, and peculiar happiness of expression, render him the most agreeable of companions. And those must be wanting in sensibility to be much in the company of Sir Charles Belmont without being improved. How then, my dear Maria, was it possible for me, without any prepossession in favor of another, not to become attached to a man so calculated to make me happy. I have no one to blame

but myself. If it is a fault in a young woman to feel a partiality for one, who has not the same sentiments for her, then indeed I am most censurable. This is the last letter I think you will be troubled with on this subject.

When you have read the inclosed, I beg you will return it, with your sentiments on the contents.

Say every thing that is kind from me to Mr. Ashbourne. I am anxious to see him; and, when you are married, if you take a trip to Glenmore Castle, do allow me to attend him. I should be delighted to watch over your dear father with the duty of an affectionate child, having all the feeling of one.

Sir James and Lady Mitford press me very earnestly to reside with them. I cannot comply with their wishes. Here I am placed with the approbation of one, whom---- No more!---I will not again advert to a *certain* individual, if it is possible to avoid it.

I have written a short letter for me, intending to accustom myself by de-

gress to an abridged correspondence. You see I conclude that you will soon become the married friend of

Your affectionate

E. MELVILLE.

LETTER XV.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO MISS MELVILLE.

Sunny Vale, Sept. 5, 1812.

My dear Miss Melville,

MY hasty departure from Melmoth House prevented me from taking leave of you and the worthy family you are with.

Mr. Dwyer will obey all your commands, as in the life time of Mrs. Melmoth. He is a respectable man; and of tried integrity. I think it therefore adviseable to continue him in the stewardship.

Your sensibility shall not be wound-

ed by an explanation of my motives for leaving Berkshire so abruptly, though it was not without a conviction of the imperious necessity of so painful an exertion. I am now at Sunny Vale, one of the most beautiful situations in England; at least in my eyes; endeared to me by having been the seat of my ancestors; and where, by studying the character of those who merited the approbation of their sovereigns, I hope to acquire fortitude to carry into effect the mandates of my own; and to deserve the favors he has already extended to me.

I expect a summons from the minister, though perhaps some delay may detain me 'till the spring. I anxiously wish to be employed. Yet fear I shall feel some reluctance to go. This is more supportable than suspence. Never shall I return 'till a certain event has taken place. My pen is but too ready to obey the dictates of a heart ill at ease. Pardon me, thou most exalted of human beings.

I am incoherent;—unintelligible.—I do not wish to be understood;—but I am wretched.

The poor pensioners of Mrs. Melmoth you will I am sure superintend as usual; and Mr. Dwyer will answer any demands, you may make, or cause to be made on him. I shall write to Dr. Syms; and I hope, through him, I shall also hear of you, whose happiness will ever be the first wish of my heart.

When you have bestowed your hand on the fortunate man honoured by your choice, I may, amongst other friends, be permitted to congratulate you on the happy event. Adieu, my dear Miss Melville; and may you be blest richly as in my estimation you deserve; more you cannot wish yourself.

Believe me your
attached and faithful
friend,
CHARLES BELMONT.

LETTER XVI.

MISS ASHBOURNE TO MISS MELVILLE.

Scarborough, Sept. 11, 1812.

INDEED, my dear Emily, Sir Charles Belmont's letter is the strangest composition for a man, in his senses, I ever read in my life. That some nefarious wretch is busily employed I have no more doubt, than I have of his being attached to yourself. That, I think, is sufficiently evident. At the same time I advise you, advise, (mind that) to subdue your partiality for one, who is under an influence greater than you, with all your loveliness and accomplishments, will ever attain. I desired you to mark *my* advising *you*. Did ever the like happen before? No! believe me, volumes have

I had of your advice, reprovings, reprehending, recommending, and condemning; but it would have been almost sacrilege in me to have presumed to hint a word of advice to such an unerring mortal,—so angelic a being, as Emily Melville.

The truth is, I am very soon to become a fair married dame, as my father has informed you;—therefore I may be allowed to know something more upon every subject than any *single she* living. And to assume a little consequence previous to the act I am about to commit, is surely excusable. Brensly has, really and truly, got my consent to become his—wife. No promises of reform, I assure you, on my part; that business I leave entirely to him. He promises, at a most famous rate, to be very good; and a great deal of nonsense beside. I wont begin with any such acts of supererogation till I see how it sits upon him. His good example may do wonders; and he shall have all the credit of modifying both

himself and me, if he is succesful. Am I not equitable and just to the good man?

Lord Glenmore and my father are most delectable friends; scarcely ever apart. I suppose they think that is one means of keeping us together. Brensly is now published and declared an accepted lover; and approved of by our dads.

I have not looked to the right or left, unless my caro sposo elect was there. Walking with him yesterday we met Nugent. I did not see him when he passed,—for a good reason,—I had shut my eyes. Brensly said, "What did that puppy laugh at?" I enquired, whom he meant. "Nugent;" he replied. "I did not see him," I said. "Not see him!" he exclaimed, "he was very near us."—"That is very possible; but my eyes have been shut, sometime." Brensly, half angry, cried, —"Dear Maria, don't make me ridiculous! That coxcomb will have some remark to make either on you or

me. I will certainly cane him, if he does."—"Dear Brensly, do have a little patience with me; and consider you have so recently borne a principal figure in the court of folly yourself for the garb of seriousness to sit easy upon you. Is there a dungeon or place of confinement in Glenmore Castle?"—"No! why do you ask?"—"Or a house of industry near?—for I suspect that in your magisterial zeal you will commit your wife, if she has the temerity to dispute your worship's authority." Pressing my hand, he cried, "You are a dear bewitching girl."

Sept. 13.

"I hope you have not languished to have Sir Charles Belmont's letter again in your possession. I have a great inclination to bring it myself to you. Emily, I have a good mind to abscond: this matrimonial spectre is enough to give one the horrors. All my friends are very bountiful to me upon the approaching occasion; and

I shall be quite a treasure to Brensly, If I can but practice half the good advice presented to me. Surely I must be one of the wickedest of the wicked, that my friends should pour in such loads of advice. I wish some of them would keep a little in reserve for their own use; or 'till I am in necessity; I will then thank them for their charitable contributions. Of this estate I have not told Brensly; and, if we were to compare notes, it is not very improbable but he may be as rich as myself.

I wish, my dear Emily, you would come to me: I am afraid I shall be very foolish; and should Mr. Brensly be unkind, or impatient at the little flights of fancy, I ever shall be guilty of, I am sure I never shall endure it. Used as I have been to such an indulgent father, who was oftener amused than displeased with me, I shall too sensibly feel the difference not to observe it.

Once more I repeat, I have a

great inclination to abscond. I wonder what the good folks will say. All my friend's presents of advice I will leave behind me for Bremsly.

Write to me. Tell me you wave all scruples, and will come to us. I would not refuse you, Emily. My father too;—no, he does not express it; but I know he longs to see his dear Emily. Adieu.

LETTER XVII.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO COL. YORKE.

Sunny Vale, Sept. 18, 1812.

My dear Friend,

WHEN I sent you word of my abrupt departure from Melmoth Park, I intended going into Sussex; but have changed my mind to that of proceeding for Sunny Vale.

In expectation, as I am, of being sent either to Spain, or Portugal, I resolved

to spend the short time, I may probably remain in England, at my paternal seat in Kent: and I rejoice I did so. Here—I can enjoy my own thoughts without interruption.

The house, the situation, the interest I feel in every object that presents itself to my view, are soothing to my perturbed state of mind. Soon after my arrival here, I wrote to Miss Melville; and though I did not absolutely explain my motives for quitting Berkshire, yet I fear I have said enough for her to see my weak endeavours at concealing my passion are fruitless.

I have spent nearly three weeks here; and have not seen a human being, except two or three workmen. A thousand plans have I formed, in the hope of deriving satisfaction from some one of them, and relieving my mind from its present anguish. One only, which has been floating for several months, has the power of alleviation: to that will I cling as my anchor of hope; and to relinquish Mrs. Mel-

moth's property I am convinced will afford me the only satisfaction I can now enjoy. I ever have felt a repugnance to take it from this noble-minded girl. My own little patrimony is sufficient for all my present purposes. And, by the aid of the mission, in which I expect to be employed, I may contrive not to want any addition to my income. Having formed this plan, my mind seems relieved; and I am become composed, and better satisfied with myself.

. . . . . .

I called in George Street as I came through London. Horace had, I suppose, been strictly interrogated as to my attentions to Miss Melville; as a volley of invectives were poured out by Mrs. Howard against that lovely young woman. I at last told her if she could not find a more agreeable topic than the acrimonious abuse of one we were both so highly indebted to, she must excuse me for declining to be so entertained. This silenced her as to Miss Melville. Her complaints

were then directed against her son; Mr. Howard coming in for a share. If my sister does not exaggerate the faults of her son, his ruin is inevitable, as a strong propensity to gaming has lately discovered itself; and he is become a frequenter of the lowest houses devoted to that destructive vice, where he is generally a considerable loser. This is a serious complaint; but, as she descended to a variety of others, I did not feel disposed to lend my attention to so many domestic grievances at once; so I made my bow, promising to call again before I left town.

I purchased furniture for four rooms at Sunny Vale, which has given it an appearance of comfort it very much wanted.

When I was in Holland, I was at the house of a burgomaster. He took me to spend a day at his villa. There was so striking a resemblance between that and my present abode, that I made several observations on the dis-

position of the plantations, &c. and I am now making some alteration upon the same plan. This I can do without trespassing on the beautiful parterre, my mother formed and took such delight in. Every tree or shrub planted by her I hold most sacred; and I feel that sensation here, which may be felt, but not described, when either going over the apartments formerly occupied by my revered parents, or walking in the grounds. I wander about 'till I am absolutely exhausted by fatigue. I could almost persuade myself that I remember my mother: it is so gratifying to the present frame of my mind, that I try to fix my recollection on her person, manner, and voice.

The first affords me some satisfaction; as a full length picture of her remains in the drawing room. On this I gaze 'till I am dissolved in womanish weakness. You will think me quite childish. My mind has been, and still is, much enervated by the

passion that has for months obscured every other idea, that did not derive its existence from that source.

I ought perhaps to go into Sussex, as many complaints are made against the steward there; who, I think, is little better than a madman, if what is related of him is just. One letter, which I received this morning, I have inclosed for your amusement. I think the writer must have had some trouble in composing so curious a description. I am not disposed however to encounter either the complainants or Mr. Jackson, the steward; therefore I shall write to Mr. Dwyer to visit the farms in Sussex; and settle all grievances for the present. If you direct to me in town, it will be forwarded to me here.

Your's,

C. BELMONT.

MR. WILLIAMS TO SIR CHARLES BELMONT, BART.

Pevensey. Sept. 16, 1812.

Honored Sir,

I HOPE your honor will excuse the liberty I take in writing to complain of Mr. Jackson, your honor's steward; but really, (and I hope you will not be offended at what I am going to say) it is, sir, unbearable; for Mr. Jackson is become quite maddish like; and it will be impossible to do you justice, either by using the land as we ought to do, or paying your rent, as it becomes due. I assure your honor what I am going to relate is true, as your tenants, Mr. John Lowe, Mr. Thomas Walters, and Mr. George Jones, as well as myself, can certify; and who have often desired me to write to your honor; but I was loath

to complain, if I could avoid it; but, as I have undertaken to represent our uncomfortable situation, it is necessary I should inform your honor of some of the queer whims of Mr. Jackson, in hopes you will either remove him, or oblige him to behave himself like other people.

This malady, as I may call it, shewed itself in Madam Melmoth's time; but, as the old lady was thought to be a little touched herself, we were afraid of making matters worse by complaining.

Mr. Jackson's christian name is Abel; though he sometimes chooses to be called Cæsar. We always know he is very bad on the Cæsar days. Well, sir, upon the death of your honor's aunt, Mr. Jackson insisted upon every tenant sending each a man, though it was a busy time with us. That we should not very much have minded, but for the accident, which happened to two men. He made them pick out, what he called, Roman

brick, or tile, out of the castle ruins; in doing which, a large piece of the wall fell down, broke one man's arm, and crushed another's foot; so that they were not able to work for near two months. And this rubbish was, he said, to build a temple with, in his garden; or rather in the plot of ground inclosed by the walls of the castle. He then got a figure from the head of a ship that had been wrecked in our bay; and which he called Diana, in honor (as he was wicked enough to say) of your aunt; though it was no more like her, than my dog Mop is; and I am sure your honor's aunt never wore snakes about her head like this figure.* Not satisfied with this vagary, he came very early one morning into our yard, where the girl was milking, and desired her to help him open the mouths of the calves, as he wanted one for a particular purpose:—it must be a very fine one, and have no spots upon its tongue.† The girl

* Medusa. † Observed for sacrifice.

laughed, but was afraid to refuse; and luckily for me, none suited; so he travelled off to farmer Walters, where he found one to his mind, and sent it to the castle.

The poor calf was dressed up with flowers. We don't know the reason for this fancy, but Mr. Jackson has lately been very fond of hanging strings of flowers about the heads and horns of dumb animals; and the cottagers, about Pevensey, dread seeing him come into their gardens. Well! your honor, the poor innocent calf was sacrificed, as Mr. Jackson informed us; and by himself, in a strange outlandish dress; and with horrible looks all the time he was killing it, and cooking for us, who came out of curiosity.

Mr. Jackson told us this ceremony was performed to the *manes* of your honor's aunt. Now I had not heard Madam had one; your honor may know perhaps better than I do, who never saw her but once; then she

looked very much like other christians.

I am afraid your honor will be tired, but it is impossible to tell our grievances in a few words; and it is better to inform you of all at once, than be troubling you again; and it is the opinion of us all, that if the comet had not come, the poor man never would have been so desperate bad as he has been since that was so much in vogue. Though I cannot say for certain that had much to do with the games he invited us to last July. He came and asked me to lend him my barn for two days, which being before harvest I could not well refuse our steward; though, had I known it had been one of his Cæsar days I believe I should have denied him. Invitations were sent to all the tenants, their wives, and daughters; and many of the neighbours were invited to see some limping games.* The women folks, who are always for seeing sights,

* Olympic Games.

could not be kept at home: so we were obliged to go with them. I was quite thunderstruck by the first object I saw, which was one of my own poor working oxen with long strings of flowers and ribbons hanging about him, and running like any thing mad: the other I was told was gone off in another direction.

We waited in the street to see what the hubbub was, at a breach* in the castle wall. This proved to be our steward mounted upon what he called a car, but in reality it was nothing more, in the world, but his wife's easy chair put up in a dung cart; himself dressed like the lord mayor of London; only he had green boughs stuck about his head. Neighbour Jones's oxen (for we would not let him have our horses) almost covered with greens and flowers, drew Mr. Jackson; and trouble enough the man had to keep them from running away with the cart. This difficulty got over, we were ad-

* A breach was always used instead of gates.

mitted into the barn, which Mr. Jackson called *Pan—something, but I can't remember what; but I suppose it is the same as a play-house. Candles in abundance stuck about, though broad day light. I began to be alarmed for fear fire should damage the barn. The women being all seated, and Mr. Jackson ascended to his throne, which was his wife's chair removed to an ox-crib; and, on a signal given by him, out rushed eight fellows from behind a curtain, almost naked; and began to cuff one another about at that rate, that I expected the little clothes they had on would be torn off; so I said to neighbour Walters,—

"This may do very well for heathen women folks, but I don't admire it for our wives and daughters; so I shall take mine home directly." And, getting up, he did the same. I opened the door, and put out the candles; at which Mr. Cæsar Jackson was very angry, as it seems he lost some balls

* Pantheon.

he had in a tin mug, he called a silver cup. Your honor's barn, I thought, was of more consequence than his balls.

I have in this letter, long as it is, given your honor but a very small part of our grievances; and would you condescend to come to Pevensey Castle, you would be convinced of the necessity of an alteration, I am,

honored sir,

your dutiful tenant,

WM. WILLIAMS.

LETTER XVIII.

MISS MELVILLE TO MISS ASHBOURNE.

Reading, Sept. 20, 1812.

I WILL not, my dear Maria, add to your store of advice, but thank you for the little sprig you gave me in your last kind letter. Accept, my

much loved friend, every wish, flowing from affection, for your happiness, which, I hope, will be as permanent as that I have often the pleasure to witness in my good friends Sir James, and Lady Mitford; who, I really believe, never have, during the thirty years they have been married, had a serious disagreement.

Sir James, undoubtedly is not a man, whose exterior is very prepossessing. Yet his kind and friendly manner is so truly engaging, that it is not possible to be long acquainted, and not esteem him. They are unfortunate in their only son, who has married a young woman without birth, fortune, or education; one whom lady Mitford cannot make a companion of; but she has taken little Charlotte entirely to educate. She is frequently with me. I am teaching her music; and, as she has an excellent ear, it is a pleasure to me to instruct her. But I have been too ill, for some days past, to attend to the dear girl; having had such an ex-

cruciating pain in my side, that it is by particular favor Dr. Syms permits me to write even these few lines. He reminds me, I have exceeded the time allowed me. I find I must obey him.

LETTER XIX.

COL. YORKE TO SIR CHARLES BELMONT.

Waterford, Sept. 17, 1812.

My dear Belmont,

WITH some difficulty I got leave of absence for one month, which I intended should charitably have been bestowed upon you. I had not only engaged my passage in the packet from the harbour of Dublin, but had actually one foot in the boat, when a fellow gave me a tug by the flap of my coat, and I came souse on my back in the water. I shook myself, like my dog, who shared the same fate as his master. This plunge, I

found, was caused by my servant, who was sent with an order from the colonel, that I should go to Waterford immediately, to quell disturbances there; the regiment having marched for that place. My man had brought my horses. This was rather an unexpected counter-march; and I hope it is no reflection upon my courage to acknowledge I should have been better pleased, if the order had arrived, after I had sailed. So here I am at Waterford, instead of London.

I called on Watkins last evening; it was so long before I could gain admittance, that I thought they must have left their house, till, on examining it, I saw a light glimmering from the upper part of one of the windows; all of which were built up to the upper pane of glass, for fear of being fired at. What a wretched situation must the country be in, to make such a precaution necessary! Poor wretches! few of them know what they fight for; and I am sure I cannot inform

them. I only obey orders:—blow out their brains to make them quiet.

I am very thankful that I have no love affairs to distract me at this time; and I think, Belmont, you had better stifle your sighs and groans, and be the man you were when you returned to England. You are little better than Don Quixote; and I expect to hear all the Kentish millers are in league against you, expecting their mills to be attacked by *Don de Belmont*. I declare, I would not live within a mile of Sunny Vale. I should dread the being drowned by the overflowing of the river, swelled by your tears; or perhaps blown away by a tornado raised by your sighs.

What! if Emily Melville does love another man; is that any reason you should be like the troubled ocean;—never at rest? You remind me of a beggar, to whom I gave a shilling this morning; he next asked me for a pair of shoes. So you could not be satisfied with the noble minded girl (as you

justly call her) giving you a fine estate, without her giving you herself also. My beggar had more wit than you; for he took my shilling, though I gave him no shoes.

The drum beats to arms; and I must march.

Your's,

H. YORKE.

LETTER XX.

C. HOWARD, ESQ. TO HON. G. BRENSLY.

George Street, Sept. 22, 1812.

YOUR letters, particularly the two last, my dear Brensly, have amused me beyond any of your former lucubrations. Never was a poor sinner more frightened than you are. Keep up your spirits, my friend; matrimony is not so terrific as your imagination has depicted it to you. Your becoming one of the quorum is a bright-

thought; a most excellent transition from the gay George Brensly to the sage magistrate. What moved you, Brensly, to so extraordinary a step? is it that you may escape from the punishment of some trifling misdemeanours committed by yourself? Very politic I grant you; and it does your fertile brain credit.

I will not allow you to form your opinion of the married state by what you may have observed in my brother's family. You may comfort yourself that there is not such another woman in existence as his wife; so there you are perfectly secure. The situation of my beloved Caroline vexes Mrs. Howard beyond concealment; and, as the time approaches when I may expect to be a father, my anxiety increases, though I have the satisfaction to observe her health and spirits are better than they were two months ago.

I was yesterday under apprehensions of being obliged to leave her for a few

days, having heard from a friend that my good mother was ill. I hope she is not in danger; for, if she is, and desires to see me, I shall be cruelly distressed. I could not go to Alnwick, and back again, under a week, or ten days. Caroline, who is very fond of my mother, is anxious that I should go; though, at this time, a separation would be most painful to us both.

Sir Charles Belmont has been absent from Melmoth Park for several weeks; and is making improvements at Sunny Vale. How is this? I don't understand. Mrs. Howard is evidently pleased he should be any where rather than near Miss Melville.

Let me know when you rank with one of us, that you may in due form receive the congratulations of

your affectionate friend,

CLEVELAND HOWARD.

LETTER XXI.

HON. MRS. BRENSLY TO MISS MELVILLE.

Scarborough, Sept. 29, 1812.

I DEMAND your congratulations, my dearest Emily. I was married yesterday. The most sober, solemn, quiet wedding day ever passed, I do really believe. If I live 'till the anniversary of this momentous event, it shall be my fault if we have not a gala to celebrate it. If our fathers, aunts, and cousins expect me to be mewed up in a cage, like my parrot, they will find themselves most egregiously mistaken; and it shall soon be my business to convince them of their error.

However, I will not spoil Brensly's honey moon. The next shall be mine. You have no idea of the fellow's inso-

lence already; and only married yesterday.

We leave Scarborough the day after to-morrow for Glenmore Castle, where we are to remain a few weeks, if the air agrees with my dear father's health; and where, I suppose, I am to be exhibited to all the Brenslys, even to the third, and fourth generation; 'till they are tired of looking at their new relation.

I am grieved, my dear Emily, by the account you give of your health; and to come to Scarborough would be impracticable. Mrs. Lucas goes with us as far as Newcastle, where we shall leave her. I could almost hate that Belmont for giving you pain, as I cannot but think he is very much the cause of your illness; and you are a silly girl to think of him.

Write to me and don't be afraid to write with your usual freedom. It is an understood thing, I assure you, between Brensly and me, that the letters from friends are not to be inspected by either.

My father and hus—hus—husband unite in kind regards.

LETTER XXII.

MISS MELVILLE TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

Reading, October 4, 1812.

INDEED, my dear Maria, I do with great sincerity congratulate you on your marriage; and hope, as it is a connection approved of by the best of parents, so it may prove in his Maria's happiness an increase of his own.

Since I wrote last I have been extremely ill, and obliged to keep my room; indeed for three days I was confined to my bed, but I have the pleasure to inform you I am better, and permitted to come into the drawing room.

Dear Lady Mitford is also unwell, and dare not venture out. Mrs. Syms

is seldom other than ill. Now, Mona, I expect you to say, as I live in the house of a medical man, I have the care of the sick list. I assure you, if it were not for our good Mrs. M. Syms, we should sometime be rather dull, her lively temper, with the kindest heart ever possessed by any human being, makes even a sick room cheerful. She is a most agreeable companion; and I feel myself greatly indebted to her. If I play and sing to her, she reads to me.

I shall direct this to you under cover to Lord Glenmore, at Glenmore Castle. I am again forbidden to write, as it has increased the pain in my side; though I do not experience it to day.

I dare not make any remarks on your last letter, some part of which was not calculated to give me pleasure; though no circumstances can ever displace you from the affections of

your friend,

EMILY MELVILLE.

Best regards to dear Mr. Ashbourne and Mr. Brensly.

LETTER XXIII.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO MAJOR YORKE.

Sunny Vale, October, 4, 1812.

WISH me joy, dear Yorke, Brensly is married; and I am at liberty to offer my hand to the woman, who possesses the heart of your friend. I can write no more. I am setting off this moment for Reading, on the wing of expectation aided by hope.

CHARLES BELMONT.

LETTER XXIV.

HON. MRS. BRENSLY TO MISS MELVILLE.

Glenmore Castle, October 8, 1812.

I AM by no means satisfied with your last letter, my dear Emily. You are, I am sure, very ill; or you would write long letters to me as usual. If writing hurts you, I beseech you will not attempt it, but depute one of the girls just to say how you are. This, I propose, that I may not be disappointed when I do hear from you.

I like my new relations wonderfully, except one maiden aunt of Lord Glenmore. She is as thin as a lath; and sits musing, with her arms folded over each other, from morning 'till night, never moving them, except at meals, just to cut her victuals and feed herself. Patience she possesses beyond any thing you can conceive. There is

a fly, that has been making a toilet of her nose, ever since I have been writing: there it sits, dressing itself; and aunt wont disturb it.

Lady Harriet is a delightful creature; and we are excellent friends already. You would be much pleased with her. No! you would not; she is like her brother; though I don't despair, Emily, of living to see you change your opinion of my good man.

That fly on my aunt's nose makes my eyes ache. What a famous faquir would she have been! A slow fire on her crown would not have moved a muscle; or caused a wince. No one, coming into the room at this momemt, would suspect she was alive.

Glenmore Castle is situated on the declivity of a hill; and at the foot runs the river Tweed. A streamlet from which flows through the garden, and forms a cascade, that has a pleasing effect from a grotto. The air here is too cold for my dear father, therefore we shall shorten our visit, and hey to

opened to me of possessing the woman I adored, gave me such animation and eagerness to know my fate, that I had not patience with the poor animals for not sympathising in the impetuosity I wished to travel with. Humanity however did not quite forsake me; and I arrived at Reading a little before ten in the evening of the same day I left Sunny Vale. Let me here pause a little, and collect my scattered senses.

I am once more myself; and, as the wind is unfavorable for the sailing of the packet, I will devote the intermediate time to inform you of the cause of my present misery.

My impatience to see Emily was too great to allow me to wait 'till the morning; and, discharging the chaise at the inn, I proceeded to Dr. Syms's. Heavens! can I ever forget the delightful hopes, that seemed so near being realized, when with a beating heart I ascended the steps, and my trembling hand approached the knocker;—and this ecstatic feeling, in a few moments,

changed to frenzy! Oh! I am wound up to the height of despair at the bare recollection.

I was in the act of knocking, when the door was suddenly opened. The house in apparent confusion; and Emily's maid pushing by me. I caught her arm, and enquired if Miss Melville was ill; the girl replied "She has been ill, sir, but she is better now; she has got a little girl; and I am going for a nurse." I let go my hold; and away she ran. Recovered a little from my first surprise, I advanced a step or two into the house. The cries of an infant, at that moment, reached my ear; and acted upon me like an electrical shock, that threw me several paces back. The full import of Mrs. Howard's insinuations, with the girl's account of her mistress, flashed upon my mind: and, more dead than alive, I retraced my steps back to the inn.

Unable to give any directions, the humane hostess brought me a cordial, which in some degree restoring me to

the use of my faculties, I ordered a chaise to Melmoth House. Oh! what agony did I suffer during that short drive, which I thought would never end! Twice did I call, to tell the post boy he had missed the road; the last time I did so was at the door of Melmoth House. The moment I entered, I rather flew, than ran, up stairs into what had been Emily's dressing room. Rage now was uppermost, and absorbed every other emotion; and I was profane enough to wish for annihilation before morning. Bitterly I vowed vengeance against, as the villain, who had seduced and deserted the most lovely of created beings.

Fortunately for him and myself, an express arrived about one o'clock, with orders for my attendance at the secretary of state's office, at eleven the next morning. The impossibility of gratifying my revenge, without neglecting my duty, must make me yield to dire necessity; and leave the destroyer of my peace (and I must hope it) a prey to a guilty conscience.

What a miserable night did I spend! Rest I attempted not to take; but employed myself in writing to Emily, to Bromly, to Sir James Mitford, and yourself. All of which I left in fragments, shattered about the room. I now find I locked the door, and brought the key away with me.

I endeavoured to persuade myself I had been to hasty, and had deceived myself. This idea illumined my mind for an instant; and I determined to return to Dr. Syms's to be convinced if I were in an error. This exhilarating thought communicated a momentary relief to my bursting heart; and I was upon the point of leaving Melmoth House to go to Dr. Syms's, when the chaise was announced that was to take me to London. I looked at my watch; and found it was next to an impossibility that I should get to town in due time without the greatest expedition. I was therefore obliged to leave Melmoth House in an agitation of mind but ill calculated for the arduous charge I was about to undertake.

I arrived at the secretary of state's office a few minutes after eleven. My looks betrayed the perturbed state I was in, I believe; or at least gave me so much the appearance of ill health, that the minister expressed great concern to see me so unwell; and that the nature of the business was of such importance, as not to admit of any delay, though he was afraid I should suffer by the unavoidable expedition required in the commission, with which I was to be charged. I assured his lordship that travelling was absolutely necessary for me; and, the only chance I had for recovering my health was by a change of air; but that I hoped to prove myself in no respect less equal to the business entrusted to me in consequence of my present indisposition.

Having some hours to myself, as my dispatches were not quite made up, I went to my lodgings, where, among some other letters, one was delivered to me with the Reading post mark,

I opened it with a trembling hand; but having read a few lines only, I tore it indignantly into a thousand atoms. Those few lines were filled with such extravagant expressions of friendship and personal regard for myself, and such bitter invectives against the poor disgraced Emily, that my heart recoiled at the author of this nefarious composition.

I just called on my sister Howard. I am sure she was shocked by my ghastly appearance, though she had the forbearance not to give pain to me by any inquiries into the cause. I have powerful reason to think she was too well acquainted with the state of my mind; as I saw a letter with the Reading post mark on her work table, which appeared the very counterpart of mine. She observed me look at it, I believe; as she drew it near herself, and put it into a drawer. My sister was kindly affectionate and anxious about my health, which she begged me repeatedly to be careful of. Mr.

Howard I did not see, as he never leaves Mr. C. Howard, who has lost an tenderly beloved wife under circumstances the most afflicting to an affectionate husband.

Poor Cleveland! he is happy in comparison with me. He can think of his lost Caroline as an angel. Oh! had Emily died uncontaminated by vice, I might, I should have deeply lamented her loss. The consolation of her being gone to join her kindred spirits would have softened regret; and a melancholy pleasure in dwelling upon her perfections would have succeeded. Fallen as she is, I never shall cease to love her. I cannot tear her image from my heart. No common machinations could have succeeded against such a woman as Emily Melville. Free from vanity, that bane of her sex, flattery she despises. To that unsuspicious confidence which judges others by herself must she have fallen a victim. Perish, thou villain! who, under the specious appearance of tender

affection and truth, hast seduced this beauteous, fairest, brightest, ornament of her sex.

Oh! Emily! beloved Emily! if you retire to the most obscure corner of the habitable globe to hide your shame, yet will thy image be ever dear to me; never, never can you be forgotten by Belmont, while the power of recollection is spared. Dear Yorke, pity your friend, who from the flattering pinnacle of hope is plunged into the abyss of despair.

The wind has come round. All is ready; and I am summoned on board. My thoughts must now be turned to business. Fortitude come to my aid! Reason, obey my call; and resume thy empire over my fleeting thoughts; and enable me to perform my duty to my king, and country! Adieu, dear Yorke.

Your unhappy friend,

C. BELMONT.

LETTER XXVI.

HON. MRS. BRENSLY TO MISS MELVILLE.

Bath, Oct. 13, 1812.

I AM cruelly disappointed by not hearing from you, my dear Emily; and if I do not soon, you may expect to see me at your elbow; for I am resolved to take a trip to Reading, and see what you are all about there. I can leave my dear father to the care of Lady Harriet, whom he is much pleased with. She is indeed a charming young woman. At five and twenty she has the playfulness of eighteen.

As for my,---(what shall I call him) husband---I believe, he can amuse himself very well, I can assure you. Here are three or four young widows Brensly does not think at all disagreeable. Do you know, Emily, I think those widows intolerable, and a

greater nuisance to wives, than a whole covey of old maids. Their weeds laid aside, their widowship is a sanction for being quite free and easy with any man they can get acquainted with, either married or single. Now, if a few decent women, not young, happen to be in my way, I have only to whisper, *old maid*; wink at one; and nod at another; and you will see all well wishers to the marriage state shy off; and leave these ancient damsels to their own confabulations.

I was wondering the other day how I should look in my weeds. I tried some on yesterday; and did not much like myself. So, Brensly, you may live a little longer.

I hope you observed from whence I dated my letter; for I do not recollect I have told you we arrived at Bath yesterday week. Brensly shewed me, this morning, the very spot you stood on, when he first saw you.—Too retentive a memory for a married man! I hope I am not becoming jealous; if

I am, it is because I have nothing to do. I will attentively watch myself; and if I find I am falling into that humour, I will make a transfer of it to my husband. You know, Emily, what is mine belongs to him; and for the universe, I would not keep my *dear* out of his lawful right. Therefore to give him a sip out of the cup of jealousy will be doing as a dutiful wife ought to do. Come, there is some amusement in this act of justice. But who shall I select as a proper object to aid me in this delectable plan for tormenting. By all the lovely witches in the service of Macbeth, that fashionable coxcomb Nugent appears, and is prancing in the Crescent; the very man of all others to answer my purpose. So, Brensly, if you flirt with widows, I will assuredly do the same with bachelors. I am so full of my project I can scribble no longer than to assure you I am only playful to torment in retalia-

tion; but in all humours, whether good or bad,

Your affectionate

M. BRENSLY.

LETTER XXVII.

MISS MELVILLE TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

Reading, October 16, 1812.

My dear Maria,

AS you are delighted with adventures, I hope the one I have to relate will afford you as much amusement, as it has surprise and astonishment to me and this family.

When I last wrote to you it was the second day of my being in the drawing room. I had just sent away my letter, when Mrs. M. Syms proposed a game of chess, which she is teaching me. We were so very earnest on our game, that we were not sensible of its being near ten when a carriage stopped; and

thinking it was Dr. Syms returned, we put up our chess board, expecting him; and Thomas, opening the door, announced Mrs, Roff, my dress-maker; who had two dresses to make for me, but in consequence of my illness I had not sent for them. I was rather surprised by her coming at so late an hour; but I had no time for farther comment. A tall woman followed Thomas, dressed in a plaid, and large black veil; she appeared rather bundling, but concluding it was the person I was expecting, I said, "Well, Mrs. Roff, you have brought both my dresses home, I hope." The woman spoke not; but throwing back her plaid, held something out to me. I mechanically extended my hands to receive it. The stranger, bending forward a little, laid the parcel on my lap; and dropping a slight curtesy, hastily quitted the room.

I was astonished at the weight, and warmth of the parcel; and exclaimed, "Good heavens! an infant!" Mrs.

Mrs. Syms cried, "An infant? impossible!" She rang the bell violently; and running to the head of the stairs, called, "Thomas, Thomas! stop that woman!"—"She is gone, madam;" answered Thomas; "I met her coming down stairs; she said you rung to have the door opened for her; she appeared in a vast hurry to get into the chaise, which had four horses, and drove off very fast.

We were all amazement, for Mrs. Syms and Isabel were now with us. On the breast of the sleeping innocent was pinned a label with EMILY written in large characters. By this we conclude it has been baptized, though Dr. Syms is of opinion it cannot be more than three days old.

Every female servant, and all the Syms's, were collected in my drawing room. Enquiries, and conjectures, from one to another, quickly passed. The woman wore a large thick black veil, which entirely concealed her face. She spoke not to any one, but Tho-

mas; and then in a hoarse whisper. I really think it was a man in woman's clothes. The servants were dispersed to make enquiries at the inns.

The child began to cry sadly. What was to be done? I thought of the gardener's wife; and hurried Lucy to desire her to come immediately. I tried to quiet the little creature, but to no purpose. It was in the midst of our distress, and consternation, that Dr. Syms arrived: finding his house in confusion, and several people from curiosity talking to the servant in the hall, at the same time hearing the cries of an infant, he hastily asked two or three questions, and followed the sound, which introduced him to a most unexpected scene. Equally surprised as ourselves, and quite as much at a loss to conjecture, who are the authors of this extraordinary transaction, he was for sending to the overseer of the poor. To this measure I would not consent; and the nurse coming in, to her I delivered the infant, promising

to reward her handsomely for her care and attention.

Thomas returned before we retired for the night. He could gain no intelligence whatever, except that of a chaise and four having been seen leaving Dr. Syms's; but that is no clue towards a discovery, as, unfortunately, four horses are almost as common as two.

Richard, more determined to find the stranger, mounted one of the coach horses, and has not since been heard of. He is an honest good fellow; and I hope no accident has happened to him. He was formerly groom to Mrs. Melmoth: but left her place to take care of his father, who being lately dead, Dr. Syms has taken him into his service. Sir Charles gave a pair of horses to Dr. Syms, which were purchased a short time before the death of my revered friend. A very acceptable present, as his were old; and Mrs. Syms is so timid, that it would have been difficult to have procured such

as would have suited her. The new chariot Sir Charles requested the good Doctor to permit to stand in his coach house for my use. So, my dear friend, I am not without many of those comforts and even luxuries, which I enjoyed in the house of my late benefactress.

Your letter, Maria, I have just received; and with pain did I con, over and over again, every line, not one of which do I approve; and I do hope you only intended to hear what arguments I should advance to persuade you not to yield to such strange fancies as those you allude to. I am willing to believe this was your intention. Should I be mistaken, misery in the extreme must inevitably be the lot of my dear thoughtless friend; and I tremble for the happiness of your excellent father.

Ah! Maria! can you look on his placid benignant countenance, and be guilty of any act that may furrow with grief that face, which seems the harbinger of peace? No! it cannot be; and

I am unnecessarily adding to my own uneasiness another pang.

As for my forming one of your family circle, it is out of the question; as, I assure you, no consideration should tempt me. I should feel the utmost uneasiness, if Mr. Brensly paid me even the common attentions due from the rites of hospitality.

Do not, I entreat you, write me any more letters like the last; and most earnestly do I beseech you not to indulge yourself in so baneful a project, so unworthy of yourself, as that of exciting your husband's jealousy. He will despise you, though he may believe you innocent of any criminal intention. Contempt, my Maria, you will not endure. Then be careful not to deserve it.

Twelve days have elapsed, and Richard not returned. I forgot to mention a note being picked up in the hall directed to me, with two lines only.—"If you merit the character, you bear, for humanity, you will che-

rish, and protect the infant Emily." This was found the next morning. I should think some one, who has confidence in me, and who unfortunately has not the means of providing for her offspring, has taken this method to have it supported. But all the little articles of dress, far from denoting poverty, rather induce me to think its parent must have been very much above the common class. It is useless to attempt to develope the mystery that attends this extraordinary incident. And vain have been our inquiries hitherto, to discover the authors of this innocent child's existence; or the person, who brought her here.

I am so much better than when I wrote last, that I get out every day; and this morning I spent several hours with dear Lady Mitford. She is equally astonished with the rest of us; and is anxious to see the little Emily, thinking it may bear some similitude to its parents. I am sure, so young as it is, I can discover no likeness whatever to any of my acquaintance.

Write to me, Maria, and relieve me from that portion of anxiety your last excited in my mind: assure me you have no such plans for future misery as you have terrified me with.

LETTER XXVIII.

HARFORD HOWARD, ESQ. TO HON. G. BRENSLY.

George Street, Hanover Square,
October 17, 1812.

My dear Sir,

FROM the long friendship subsisting between you and my brother Cleveland, I am induced to request you will have the goodness to come to town. I am under very great affliction on his account. I wrote you word of the death of my sister. This melancholy event has so deeply affected him, that for the last three days, he has scarcely tasted food, nor spoken to any one.

Perhaps, were he to see you, your presence might have a happy effect. I am greatly distressed, not knowing what to do for the best.

Poor Cleveland has lost a most amiable wife, on whom he doated; and I very much fear that his reason, as well as his health, have received such a shock, that they never will return again to their former state.

With best regards to Mr. Ashbourne, and Mrs. Brensly,

I am, dear sir,

your's truly,

HARFORD HOWARD.

LETTER XXIX.

HON. MRS. BRENSLY TO MISS MELVILLE.

Bath, October 20, 1812.

My dearest Emily.

I DO long to see your little protegé. Stay not in Reading, my

dear, for you will have the overflowings of every house that has one more than enough. You are exactly calculated for the strayed sheep, out of the pale of matrimony, to impose their brats on, to take care of for them. Never surely was such a trick put upon a fair damsel. O! how I should have enjoyed the bustle little Squallina threw you all into. She has began her career with an eclat, that will distinguish her from the common herd of females; and thousands go to their graves without obtaining half the notice this infant, if she lives, will excite.

When I am in a serious fit, as I sometimes am, I can tell you, it is always a matter of astonishment to me, that there should exist such unnatural mothers, who can be induced to commit the care of their offspring to others, when, in my opinion, nothing but imperious necessity can justify even a temporary suspension of their maternal duties. But totally to discard a poor infant as soon as it is born, and have no

farther care of it, is an offence against nature, that fills me with horror.

I never look at the interesting sight of the children at the Foundling Hospital without the most lively sensations of pity for the objects of that charity, mingled with a degree of abhorrence for the parents of those deserted children, and proud exultation at my country's characteristic benevolence. I could almost bow with reverence to the portrait of the humane founder of an asylum, that has saved many an innocent babe from the hand of violence.

Emily, are you not astonished?—I am, when I cast my eye over what I have written, a whole page upon foundling children; and I have not quite done yet. Pray do tell me, if you should find out the papa and mamma of your little Emily. By the bye, its being called by your name, I think is a very great piece of impertinence; and it is what I would not comply with. I would call it Joan, or Deborah, in short any name but my own.

Before I received your animadversions on my last, I had resolved to behave very like a good wife; though perhaps not quite so docile as my great—great—great grandmother, some two, or three centuries ago. If I had not been in so good a frame of mind, three words of your appeal to my affection for my father would have humbled me to a proper sense of my duty. Oh! to cloud that brow with sorrow, or cause the tear of shame to flow down his revered cheek, shall never be attributed to his beloved Maria. Love me therefore, dear Emily, and believe me, with true affection,

your's,

M. BRENSLY.

Sad accounts of Mr. C. Howard. Brensly I believe will go to him, in a few days.

LETTER XXX.

HON. C. BRENSLY TO H. HOWARD, ESQ.

Bath, October 21, 1812.

My dear Sir,

I AM sincerely grieved to hear so melancholy an account of your brother, for whom I have the greatest friendship; and you may depend on my being in town sometime in the course of the following week: though I do not flatter myself that, under the present distressing circumstances, the society of any friend can be supportable. And I conceive that quiet, and complying entirely with his wishes for retirement, will be more agreeable to him than the presence of any person whatever. Time only can ameliorate grief like that of my afflicted friend. However, we will hope, if I can prevail with him to return with me, that

so great a change may promote his convalescence. With best respects to Mrs. Howard, and yourself.

I remain, your's faithfully,

G. BRENSLY.

LETTER XXXI.

MISS MELVILLE TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

Reading, October 25, 1812.

My dear Maria,

AS you express so great an interest in the late extraordinary incident at Dr. Syms's, in which I am likely to bear so conspicuous a part, I think you must be anxious to hear of poor Richard, who, I informed you, was not returned when I wrote last. A week ago, Richard came back, after an absence of a fortnight. To give you any idea of the honest fellow's anxiety to fulfil what he conceives to

be his duty, I must relate a history of his travels, as nearly in his own words as I can recollect them.

The morning of Richard's return, Dr. Syms came into my sitting room to read to me a curious paragraph in his paper; and, while he was so employed, Thomas wished to speak to his master. I saw something was the matter; but whether it was joy, or sorrow, that distorted the man's features, I could not divine. With some difficulty he articulated—"Sir! Richard—is—come home."—"Is he?" I cried, "then do send him up immediately."—"Indeed, madam," answered Thomas, "he is such a figure, he is not fit to be seen."—"Why," asked the Doctor, "what is the matter with him?" Thomas made no reply, but stuffed the napkin he had in his hand, into his mouth; and, almost convulsed with laughter, hurried out of the room, and ran down stairs. Dr. Syms was all amazement; but followed him for some explanation. He returned in a few minutes with a

countenance of affected seriousness.—"Well, sir, has Richard been more successful than we have?"—"I cannot say he has," he replied, "but I think you had better hear Richard's account from himself. I have directed him to come up; and I believe he is now at the door, waiting your orders."

I desired he might be admitted; and he obeyed the summons. I could scarcely believe it was the same man, who went in pursuit of the woman, that played me such a trick. I never saw a poor fellow in so miserable a plight.—No wig; shabby hat; ragged waistcoat; no stockings; nor coat;—and shoes, that were tied round with a packthread, to keep them on his feet. "Richard!" I cried, "what is the meaning of this; have you been robbed?"—"No! madam," he answered, "but I might as well; for I have nothing left. I carried out, but the horse and myself; and, as a body may say, it was he that carried me, not me him."—"Well! we wont be too

nice; we shall understand your meaning, I dare say: but put on your hat; you will get cold, as you have no wig. Have you had any refreshment?"—"Yes, madam, I thank you, I have had plenty; and I am sure I had need, for I have had nothing to eat, since yesterday-noon, 'till I entered this blessed house, at half past eight o'clock, this morning."—"But how happened all this?" I asked.—"Why! madam, if you please to hear, I will tell you and my master all about it; but I hope you never will send me, any more, on such a wild-goose chase. I likes driving the carriage, and all that; but hunting after a woman, when she has not a mind to be found, is quite a different sort of business; and as much out of my way as"—"Come, Richard," cried his master, interrupting him, "let us have your journey now; and your remarks another time."—"I beg pardon, sir.—I was ordered, you know, madam, to follow that unknown woman, that came whisking

here with your child you know, madam, in a chaise and four; which to be sure, I did with as good heart to the business as ever man set out with; and was told, at Biddenfield, such a one had gone through about half an hour before: so I sets off, at a good round trot, 'till about a mile and a half beyond Biddenfield; when a thought came across me, like a flash of lightening,—of which way did she go,—*to* or *from* Reading. So I was fain to turn back again, to enquire, as it was not the way to overtake her, you know, sir, if she was going one way, and me the other. This took me up some time, to be sure, but I set off again, and followed 'till I came to the turnpike gate. The people told me there, that two chaises and four had passed through, about an hour before. Now, as both went the same way, I made sure account of catching her. I was forced to stop, now and tan, just to take a whet;—so must she: she could not live upon air, any more than

myself; so there we were quits. But I met with a misfortune I did not think of; —I forgot to take any money with me, except one shilling, which went to pay for the gate, and a draught of ale; and I could not get to London without feeding my horse and myself too; and the people were so ill-natured that they would not trust me; so I was obliged to leave my shirt, to pay for a feed of corn, and a slice or two of cold beef. I thought, to save trouble, as my shirt was gone, they might as well take my stockings, for which I got another shilling, that took us on to Blackfriar's bridge. You know, madam, I never went to London before. I was told to go into the yard, where there were plenty of stables; and just as I got in there, a gentleman and lady, both in plaids, drove into the yard. I could not help jumping for joy at my good luck. O! thinks I; I am upon a right scent now. My joy made me thirsty; I only went in to take a draught of porter; and, when I returned to look

at this she devil, (I beg pardon, madam) behold, she was gone. I was thunderstruck; and asked every body in the yard where she was gone to. At last, a boy told me they went into a coach, which was ordered to drive to Pickle-dilly. I got a coach too; and after them I went. For you see, sir, as I did not know where the place was, and no one was kind enough to offer to go with me, I never should have found the street of myself."

"Go on Richard."—"Pray, sir, don't hurry me." The Doctor nodded, and Richard again proceeded.

"When I got to Pickle-dilly, I was in such a puzzlation to know which house to go to, that I stood stock still, thinking. This, I found was not agreeable to the Londoners. One shoved me one way; and others, who did not like that, pushed me back again, And I could not help rapping out a kind of an oath, which the coachman said was because I would not pay him. To be sure it was a great calamity that I had no mo-

ney; and the coachman asked so much for that little bit of a ride, that I was obligated to let him have my wig, which he had taken a fancy to. I then resolved to go down one side the street, and up the other; calling at every house; giving your compliments, madam, and you would be glad to know if any woman in a plaid had carried away a child, as you had got one, and did not know whom it belonged to. Some of the servants laughed at me; others called me a great loaf,* and said, "Madam should send it to its father."—"So she would," I said, "but she does not know, who the father is." I had been on the ramblation for several hours. It began to grow late, and I was threatened to be put into a watch house, I believe they call it. I did not know my way back; and was afraid I never should get to my horse; so was obligated to have another coach to take me to Blackfriar's bridge. When I came there, all was

* Oaf.

shut in; and I did not chuse to make a noise on account of disturbing the men, who walk about with lanthorns: for though they made a great noise themselves, they did not like I should; though I told them I was come to London to find either father or mother to my mistress's child. Well, sir, now goes my waistcoat, which happening to fit the coachman; he gave me a shilling more than I asked him, and he said I might sit in his coach all night. Before I took myself in, I inquired if he would charge me any thing for that. He promised he would not; and I soon went to sleep, for I was very tired, indeed. I had but a short nap of it, for coachman bid me get out, as company were coming in. I did not much like it; but he gave me leave to ride on the box with him. When the company were set down, I got in, to finish my sleep. But it was of no manner of use, for I had not been in, twenty minutes, before I was ordered out again. I tried to persuade the gentlefolks to let

me remain, as there were only three; but, though I was as still as a mouse, the gentlemen began to splutter, and foam at the mouth. I did not know one word they said to me; but coachman told me I must get out. Well, thinks I; if this is London sleep, I had rather spend my nights at Reading. It now was morning; and coming to where there is a long row of coaches, coachman directed me to a man, who told me the way; which was only over the bridge. I was glad to find myself there. I went to the yard gates, and succeeded in gaining admittance. My horse had been taken good care of. After some breakfast, for which I paid my last shilling, I went into the hay loft, and laid down there to take some rest; fully determined to go to every house in London, and inquire if a child had been carried away. For several days did I follow this plan; but took care not to ride again. I once thought I had found the jade. I was walking about the garden, that belongs to the

play actors; when a tall woman in a plaid, and a black veil, I think you call it, went brush by me into a house, where a man in a gold laced hat, and a stick like our Ann's warming pan handle, stands at the door. Several other people going in, I did the same; and followed her up stairs, where there were all sorts of fine things; and the people sat round, for all the world as if they were in a methodist chapel. A little man in black was in a pulpit, with a tiny bit of a hammer. I was loath to disturb the congregation 'till I found it all a flam; and nothing said about t'other world: so I squeezed myself amongst them, that she should not slip through my fingers again. When I came up to her, mercy on me! I never shall forget her looks, when I asked her, what business she had to play her tricks off upon my young mistress.—"What tricks, fellow! do you mean?"—"Come, come, madam," says I; "you may as well own it; you know you put your child into my good young

lady's lap; and you ought to be ashamed of yourself for giving a poor fellow so much trouble." She changed deadly pale; and, "Turn him out; turn him out," was followed by pulling and kicking, 'till I was at the bottom of the stairs. So, sir, you see it was of no use my finding the woman; for the Londoners are such a desperate set, they would not let me do my duty.

"Every day or two was I obliged to part with something for food, 'till I was compelled, like, to part with my boots; my coat having gone several days before. This old ragged waistcoat the hostler gave me. My hat I sold for my sunday's keep, and this old one, I have on. My shoes I picked up in the yard, before I parted with my boots. Having spent so much time, and all I had of my own, I resolved to return home; but the people at the stables objected to this. I thought it might be, because they liked my company; so I promised to come and see them again. That did not mollify

them at all; for they vowed, and swore, my horse should not move out of the yard 'till his keep was paid for. I told them, over and over again, that my master was as honest a man as ever broke bread; and paid every one his own. Argufying signified nothing; for the Londoners are so obstinate, there is no teaching them good manners; and having no affection for me or my horse, insisted upon taking the saddle and bridle; and said that was not enough, though it was master's new one. To be sure they gave me a very good halter, which I sold for a feed of corn last night. I did not like the poor fellow should return from London with a halter about his neck; so I held by his mane; and glad we are to find ourselves at home again."

Which, Maria, do you admire most, Richard's travels, or my patience, both in hearing, and also in relating them to you. The good Doctor laughed immoderately; nor could I refrain from doing the same, though, as you may

conceive, I was often vexed, and the only consolation to me in Richard's inquiries were, that my name was not thought of. True, I have not a very extensive circle of acquaintance in town. Yet, as this poor ignorant fellow was rambling, and proclaiming his business in every part of London, it was possible some one might have recollected the name of the enviable protegé of Mrs. Melmoth.

I have rewarded the honest faithful creature; and he is quite happy. I fear you have been disappointed by not hearing from me; but you will see by the date at the beginning of my letter, my intention; which I was prevented from executing, having been some days with Lady Mitford, who is unwell. I find this packet has been ten days in hand, at least ten days have elapsed since I began it.

Adieu. Your affectionate

E. Melville.

LETTER XXXII.

COL. YORKE TO SIR CHARLES BELMONT.

Lewes Barracks, Nov. 27, 1812.

I TAKE the opportunity of a friend going to Portugal to write to you, my dear Belmont. In this dreary season of the year have we been ordered from Waterford, in Ireland, to occupy the barracks at Lewes, in Sussex. A pretty tramp, to be sure, have we had of it. Landed at Milford Haven, we had to march, almost in the depth of winter, through as bad roads as any in England. However, if the good of the service requires it, a soldier must not complain; as my good father told me, when he presented me with an ensigncy. Adding, that a soldier engages his honor, and his life, for his king and the good of his country; nor

must he allow himself the privilege of pronouncing what that good is, 'till promotion and experience entitle him to recommend such and such measures as best calculated to give effect to the service he is employed in.

You admire, I hope, my retentive memory. I last night endeavoured to recollect all the advice and admonitions my father gave me, as I received my promotion to the colonel-ship of the 105 regiment, now stationed at Brighton. All night have I been laying siege to this or that place. Planning mines and countermines; or taking up positions; longing for the time of our being ordered abroad. For, though a colonel, I have seen no other service than thumping rebels into submission; and marching up to the chin in mud. I saw a fine fellow, this morning, having a shade over his eye; one arm in a sling; his wife leaning on the other; leading a little boy, while two others ran before them. All looked pale. The wounded man was only a lieute-

nant. I own, I blushed for myself; that money and interest could procure for me that promotion, I had no claim to from personal service; while the man before me, who had bled for his country, seemed to be forgotten. However I relieved my mind by relieving my pocket; in a way too, that cannot possibly wound the feelings of the person I wish to serve. I find, on inquiry, the lieutenant is brave, but poor. I think I shall be able to get him promoted to a company.

I hope, Belmont, you have recovered your spirits, which, to be sure, were a little stormy when you left England. Surely, my dear fellow, you were too precipitate in leaving Dr. Syms's door, as you did. Nothing but ocular demonstration should have satisfied me.

The cries of the infant! Language pretty strong, I must admit; and the previous illness of Miss Melville;—yet would I not have left the house with a doubt upon my mind. As it is,

you must, my good friend, conquer love; though you cannot but retain a sense of her liberal conduct towards you. If you are so fastidious as not to choose to benefit by it, her intentions were equally as honorable as if you were now dashing away at Newmarket, instead of exposing your sconce so needlessly to the enemy.

For the life of me, I cannot enter into the principles of your scruples. I hope your expedition to Spain will give you time to recollect yourself; and that you may not be such an undecided character, as you appear to be in this instance. I can scarcely believe you are the same Charles Belmont, who, to the astonishment and admiration of all your friends, conducted yourself with such firmness, as made me almost ready to hide my diminished head.

To-morrow, I join the regiment at Brighton, which appears to be a gay place even in winter: and I think in summer it must be charming.

I shall be much disappointed if I

don't hear from you by the next mail. The papers inform us of your arrival at Lisbon.

LETTER XXXIII.

HON. MRS. BRENSLY TO MISS MELVILLE.

Bath, Nov. 28, 1812.

My dear Emily,

YOUR description of poor faithful Richard, and the account he gave of himself, afforded us a most delectable treat, I assure you; and I think it was wonderful the poor fellow got home without broken bones. I wish every servant felt as deep an interest for his employer as your Richard.

Surely, you need not seek so far for the mother of your foundling, who, I suspect must be somewhere near you. As for the chaise and four, I don't believe the poor infant ever was in it.

Nothing but a trick intended to mislead you, depend upon it.

Brensly has been in town, near three weeks, with his friend Mr. C. Howard, who is quite inconsolable for the loss of his wife. I rather expect he will bring his friend back with him. I tell Harriet, she must comfort the widower. She shakes her head; as much as to say, that wont do. She thought she liked Mr. Beverly, a friend of her brother; but she might as well think of attaching a butterfly, so variable an animal is he.

You need not be alarmed, Emily, about that capering fellow Nugent. I have scarcely seen him; and, I believe, he has left Bath. You may say what you will, but Brensly shall not flirt with those widows, with impunity. An eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth; is a law, I so much admire, I will have it emblazoned in gilt characters; and hung up in our breakfast room, that we may know what we have to trust to, before we venture abroad on our perambulations.

My dear father has been musing over your late adventure, but says nothing. I wonder what he thinks; there is no knowing that, unless he will tell us; and I have tried to provoke him to do so. No! an invincible taciturnity does he observe. After all, Emily, who is the brat like. I am very sure, had I been served such a trick, I should have ferreted out the mother before this.

By the papers, Sir Charles Belmont is arrived at Lisbon. He is spoken of handsomely; and, no doubt, can flirt away with the yellow-faced donnas, as well as the best. I should like to know what he thinks of the present you have had: perhaps he has not heard of it yet.

You never mention Melmoth House now. Has it tumbled down; or did Sir Charles carry it away with him?

Brensly is just returned, and his friend with him. Write, and answer the above queries.

LETTER XXXIV.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO COL. YORKE.

Alba de Tormes, Nov. 11, 1812.

My dear Friend,

NOT happier, though in a more composed state of mind, I have an evening to spare, which I shall devote to writing to you. After transacting some business with the commandant, I proceed to head quarters. This I shall do in a few days. You will soon see the result of my visit here; and I hope it will appear I have executed my mission satisfactorily.

When I shall return to England is uncertain. It is probable, I may remain on the continent 'till there is peace.

The unfortunate situation of your poor lieutenant is only one instance,

among hundreds, of similar distress. But, to counterbalance this, only recollect how many have risen from the ranks to command over their superiors; even sons of our nobility. This will ever do credit to our commander in chief, as a rewarder of merit; though some may still be passed over, who deserve to be noticed.

I wish such of my countrymen, as are dissatisfied, could only witness the seat of war for a few days; and see what fine towns have been destroyed, villages depopulated, and the inhabitants driven from comfortable homes to experience deprivations of every description: exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and frequently in absolute want of food. None would, I think, be unwilling to contribute, even largely, to keep such dreadful evils at a distance from their own country.

To go over the field of battle the day after a severe action, as it has been my fate to do in following the army, is enough to appal the stoutest hearts;

making them forget their own individual misery in that of their fellow creatures.

As I have had an opportunity to assist, and perhaps save the life of a brave young man, and afford relief to an amiable female, I ought not to regret the necessity I was under of traversing the plain, where I was contemplating the awful sight before me. The blood of the horses mingled with that of their riders in one purple tide, so that no one could say—"This is man's, —that is the life-stream of brute." How sickening to human nature! Yet the friendly soldier was not to be deterred from seeking his comrade; but with persevering diligence turned over and over the bodies of the slain.

My attention was particularly attracted by a female of superior appearance to those, who commonly attend on such occasions. She was trying in vain to raise up an apparently lifeless corpse. Yielding to the weight, she sunk down with it. Bitterly did she weep

over the body of her husband; for such it proved to be, and seemed to despair of any succour, when I arrived at the spot. I sprung from my horse, and giving the bridle to my servant, enquired if I could render her any assistance. With tearful eyes, and features convulsed by her agonized feelings, in a voice almost choaked by sobs of distress, she cried, "Oh! do, sir, I entreat you, assist me to raise my poor husband: I have been trying to lift him up 'till I am exhausted."—"I am afraid," I replied; "it is too late; and that life itself is extinct."—"Indeed, sir, it is not, They told me he was killed. I would not believe them. Oh! my heart will break if my beloved husband is not saved. I have been searching for him, ever since it was light. He is wounded; but I have staunched the blood; and, if I can get a few cordial drops down his throat, perhaps he may yet recover." As she said, life had not fled; and I raised him up while she poured a few drops, with which

she was prepared, within his lips; and gently rubbing his temples with some of the same, his pulse became fuller. I sent my servant to the hospital to desire assistance to convey the wounded man to a place of safety.

In a short time a proper conveyance was sent. My servant returned; and I desired him to inquire if a lodging could be procured near at hand. This was also fortunately effected; so that the wounded man was soon in a tolerably comfortable bed. I staid while his wound was dressing, though the ball was not then extracted; but hopes are given of his recovery.

Their names are Mansfield. Mrs. Mansfield is little more than eighteen; a very pretty interesting young woman. On my taking leave, she dropped on her knees; and bursting into tears, was unable to utter those thanks her manner eloquently expressed. I raised her up; requesting her not to be depressed by her afflicting situation, as much would depend on the exertions

she would find it necessary to make to keep up the spirits of her husband. Having now a little recovered, she thanked me with such expressions of gratitude as could only flow from the affectionate heart of a wife, still fearful of losing her beloved husband.

Nov. 12.

I am just returned from poor Mansfield. The ball is extracted; and he is in a fair way of doing well.

This is indeed a young couple, who have ventured all for love. Mr. Mansfield is not more than twenty-two; he has no resources whatever to support himself, and his wife, but his lieutenancy. They have been married about six months. This will be a trial; and, if I don't assist them, will, I fear, very much retard the poor fellow's recovery.

My name I found was familiar to Mrs. Mansfield, which made me rather curious to learn where she came from, and in what way I could be most ser-

viceable to them. As Mr. Mansfield was ordered to be kept quiet for some hours after the ball was extracted, and I was waiting for my horse, which had broken his bridle, and made his escape, I took that opportunity of asking her, and offering my services either here or in England. She blushed, and hesitated, before she replied, by saying,—" You, sir, must have observed that we are not rich. My father is the only person we can look up to for obviating this inconvenience; but, alas, he is too much offended with us to leave room for any expectation of indulgence from him."—" From the situation I find you in, Mrs. Mansfield, I conceive the offence, you allude to, is matrimony;—an offence, which, I hope, will not be found unpardonable; and if you will commit your cause to me, I trust I shall be successful. Only there may be an inconvenient interval to sustain, as it is uncertain how long it may be before I return to England: but in the interim I must

beg Mr. Mansfield will allow me to be his banker."—"This, sir, I cannot engage for, as the probability of a reconciliation is too remote to permit us to encroach upon the generosity of friends. But that you may not think we are altogether unworthy your kind commiseration, I hope you will excuse me for wishing to inform you of some particulars relating to my family, chiefly to explain the cause of our taking, what the world denominates, an imprudent step." I bowed assent, and she began.

"My dear mother died, when I was only eleven years of age. I have two brothers, both older than myself. Being the only girl, I was particularly indulged; and, after the death of my mother, my good father redoubled his affectionate attentions to me. I must ride with him, walk with him, and be his constant companion; and in me he almost seemed to love my mother over again. In the important points of education he was himself my assiduous

instructor; and he availed himself of the masters, who attended the neighbouring schools, to secure those improvements, which he did not feel so well inclined to teach me.

"Edward Mansfield was the orphan son of a sister of my mother; and had been an inmate in our family from the death of his, which happened six years before the decease of mine. At a very early age we felt a strong attachment to each other. Edward was three years older than myself. And the first real sorrow I had ever experienced (excepting the death of my mother) was when Edward had his commission for an ensigncy sent down, accompanied by an order for him to join his regiment then serving in Portugal.

"Scarcely had our painful separation taken place, before my father became acquainted with a young lady, then on a visit to one of his friends. I was now almost fifteen. To gain me over to an approval of a stepmother was not very easy. I had been so

caressed, and considered by my father, that to have another to supplant me in his affections was not to be endured; nor would have been effected, but by the art practised upon my unsuspicious mind.

"I deeply deplored the loss of Edward, and hastily examined every paper, that fell in my way, expecting to see noticed some noble exploit achieved by my cousin. This anxiety was not lost by the insiduous Miss Blunt, who encouraged my attachment, (though she had never even seen Edward) by asking questions, and talking of him, when we were alone. By this artifice she made herself so agreeable to me, that I even pressed my father to marry her. He was delighted with me; and on the day I completed my fifteenth year did my poor father give us a mother, that was to render us all miserable.

"For six months his dwelling seemed the seat of happiness. In four months more an addition to our fa-

mily paved the way for the estrangement of his affections from the children of his former wife. I—was so good, so careful of the infant, that no one could do so well for it as *Harriet*. Under this mask of preference I was soon reduced to the situation of a mere nursery maid.

"My clothes were now out of repair, as well as out-grown. I informed my father frequently of this: his answer ever was I must apply to my mother, as she knew what was most suitable for me. I was much hurt, as he had ever been so indulgent, as not to doubt my judgement, at an age when I really did not know what was proper. Thus, I was deprived of all share in my father's affections, by gradations so imperceptible, that it was only by looking two years back, that I could trace the difference of his conduct under similar circumstances.

"About this time part of Edward's regiment returned to England; and having got leave of absence, he came

to spend a few weeks at my father's. I now felt the want of apparel more than ever. I was anxious to appear to advantage to my cousin, whose image was still deeply imprinted on my memory. It was well known to me, that the largest part of my father's income arose from my own mother's property; and therefore I refused to ask that as a favor of his wife, which I thought I had a right to expect from him; even without applying for it.

"Edward arrived. I was too much elated to think of my short dress, or darned sleeves. He appeared as much delighted by seeing me; and the observation he made on my being much grown caused a blush upon my cheek; and directing my eye to my father, he rose and left the room. Soon after my mother was sent for; and, on my retiring to my apartment, some neat muslin, and other articles of dress, the necessity of which was but too apparent, were laid on my table.

My cousin's attachment for me had

not abated; and mine daily increased. And, though my artful stepmother never ceased from slily gratifying her malicious disposition against me, Edward had got my father's consent to our union, as soon as the death of a relation should happen, from whom he had great expectations, and who from her great age and infirmities, could not be expected to live, even many months.

"Edward, from being the life and spirit of every party, became melancholy. Seldom could I get an opportunity of speaking to him; as he evidently avoided being alone with me. I strictly examined my own conduct, to no part of which could I attribute so strange an alteration. My mother too avoided me, though under various pretences I was almost constantly detained in the nursery.

"Thus did we continue to live, mutually dissatisfied with each other, 'till within ten days of the time fixed for Edward's return to his regiment,

which was then ordered to Canterbury.

"A friend wrote to inform my cousin of the death of his relation, who had made him her heir; and he must immediately go to Attleborough, to give the necessary directions for the funeral.

"The moment my mother heard this, she left the room, and summoned me to follow her. I was highly mortified, but obeyed her; and she directly sent me for several things, which were in an attic store-room, at the most remote part of the house. I had not been ten minutes there before I heard the key turned, and found myself a prisoner. I called loudly, for there was no bell. I made every exertion in my power to extricate myself, or to be heard by some of the family; but in vain; and I wept for vexation.

"There I was confined, I suppose, about two hours, when I heard myself called by my mother. I was too indignant to answer; and, soon after, she came, and, with affected surprise, liberated me.

"I flew past her to complain to my father, and Edward. Edward was gone; and she, suspecting my intention, came furiously into the room; told my father, my rudeness to her was insufferable; that out of respect, and tenderness to him, she had forborn complaining; but she found, to her sorrow, that the more indulgence she shewed, the greater insolence was she treated with.

"This accusation was followed by a flood of tears, and an hysteric fit. My explanation was not allowed a hearing; and I was ordered to my apartment, where I was suffered to remain 'till ten o'clock, when a servant brought me a light. My father followed with some refreshment for me. I saw he had been weeping. This disarmed me of every feeling of resentment I kissed his hand affectionately, though my heart was too full to speak; but, bursting into tears, he caught me to his bosom; calling me his dear Harriet, child of his beloved Emma. I

thought at that moment that I could have sacrificed my life to oblige this dear parent. Little did I expect a sacrifice was to be demanded of me, which I considered worse than death.

"My father, turning from me, said, "Harriet you profess great affection for me: I shall now put you to the proof.—You must give up Edward Mansfield."—"Sir! my father!" I cried, "are you serious? have you forgot your own promise, as well as mine?"—"It must be so, Harriet. On no other conditions will your mother consent to your remaining under my roof; or will she be prevailed upon to live with me."—"But, my dear father," I replied, "I shall soon be gone, for Edward will now have it in his power to claim me, as you know was agreed upon. You will then be relieved from the presence of a daughter, once so dear to you, though now your averted eye disclaims her."—"Harriet, speak not so harshly. You know not how deeply those expressions wound

me; but I am not to be diverted from my purpose.—I have other views for you." I am at a loss now to explain my father's meaning; but you, sir, were made the ostensible cause for my being ordered to give up my cousin."—"What, I! Mrs. Mansfield;—you do indeed, astonish me; but pray go on." She continued.

"You may well be surprised; but it was just at that time you came, for a few days, to Sunny Vale. My mother made my father believe, that, if I were not engaged to Edward, I had a chance of becoming Lady Belmont. Not that she entertained any such expectations more than myself: she had other views; and her first object was to separate me and my cousin. This I did not fully comprehend 'till Edward returned from Attleborough. He had been disappointed in his expectations, as his aged aunt's property had materially suffered by some failures; and a few hundreds, instead of thousands, were all he could save from the wreck of her fortune.

"However, he lodged a sufficient sum with his agent to purchase a lieutenancy; after which he had no more than two hundred pounds left.

"My father received him very coldly. On the contrary, my mother was overwhelming him with civilities.

"I soon retired; but wrote a note to Edward, that I must see him early in the morning. I placed this note on his table. Early, indeed soon after it was light, I dressed myself, and left my room. Edward was at the foot of the stairs, ready to receive me. Not a word did either of us utter, 'till we were in the garden. Even then, we were afraid to speak, for some time, though I was anxious to hear what had passed, after I had left the room in the evening.

"He told me my father had positively declared he had withdrawn his consent to our union. He added, he was at no loss to guess by whose instigation this measure was adopted. He then astonished me with the informa-

tion that the alteration I had observed in him, was in consequence of my wicked stepmother having the audacity to profess herself unlawfully attached to himself;—that he had avoided her; and particularly took care not to be alone with her, 'till accident brought him into the room where she was. She then told him that she well knew it was not in his power to marry; and that his neglect of her should be retaliated on the detested object of his love, whom, she could assure him, he never should gain, but to render miserable. She bid him not provoke her revenge, which should keep pace with his defiance, or observance, of her will and pleasure. She even had the shocking effrontery to offer to leave her husband, and children, if he would take her under his protection.

"This infamous proposal almost petrified my Edward; and uttering an expression of bitter contempt, he left the room to consider what mode of conduct was the best to be adopted;

so as not to encourage this vile woman's views, and yet not to exasperate her further against me; fearful I might receive personal injury from one, capable, as he believed, of proceeding to any excess of violence.

"This explanation almost deprived me of my reason. I was twice nearly fainting, more from my concern for my dear father being united to such a fiend, than from my apprehensions for my own safety.

"Edward urged me to consent to an elopement. This I absolutely refused; and begged him to wait with patience 'till I had made one more effort to gain my father's consent.

"He then informed me, he had no hope, as his uncle had told him he must leave his house that day; unless we promised, in the most solemn manner, to forego all thoughts of being united. "This," continued Edward, "I refused on my part, as I told him, his promise was given with that unreserved approbation, which I had done

no act to forfeit; and I should hold myself engaged to you, unless you dissolved it by making another choice."—"Never!" I exclaimed, "my dear Edward, will I withdraw that promise, given by affection, and sanctioned by paternal approbation."

"We were now obliged to separate, as the family were in motion, and the nursery would soon claim my attendance. Little Mary was just awake. When I entered, I pressed the dear infant to my bosom, weeping over it with sorrow, while I thought of the unnatural mother, who would have forsaken it, had her infamous overture been acceded to.

"My poor father was still fascinated by a wife twenty years younger than himself; and who had the art to make him believe she was tenderly attached to him. I loved him so sincerely, that I could not bear to make him wretched by undeceiving him; though I was unable to look at her without emotions of abhorrence.

"Edward left us that day; and the following week my elder brother, who is in partnership with an attorney in London, came to spend a few days with us. The very day after he came, he challenged me to walk to Knowle. In this walk, he informed me that Edward had been with him; and had communicated what had passed at my father's. In consequence of this, he had come to add his advice to my cousin's solicitations to marry him, whether my father consented to it, or not.

"Astonished at this advice from my brother, I was unable to reply. And he made it appear to me that my father's happiness was deeply involved, and depended upon the part I was now compelled to take. This argument, aided by my love for my cousin, overcame my scruples, and I agreed to be guided by him. I knew he never had a favorable opinion of our stepmother: and some instance of her violent temper before her marriage had lately come

to his knowledge; which, coinciding with Edward's description, made him anxious to get me away: and then, if we were married, her views upon him being at an end, and so well known to us, she might be induced to behave well to our deluded father, though we were excluded from his house.

"I once more made an effort to prevail with him to consent to our union, but in vain were all my entreaties; though he was evidently affected by my arguments. Putting therefore a part of my clothes into my brother's trunk, which he had brought nearly empty for my accommodation, I took an opportunity of sending the remainder. In a few days he went to town; and I followed in a morning coach, as we had agreed. Never can I forget the painful emotion of that moment. To leave a kind and good parent, under the impression of being thought ungrateful, was a severe struggle; and several times was I on the point of giving up our plan, but the recollection

that my brother said it would be for his happiness, as well as my own, decided my wavering thoughts.

"My good brother met and conveyed me to a friend's house, in Brookes street. Edward did not come to town 'till the day before we were married. After which my brother wrote to my father, endeavouring to reconcile him, and also to prevail with him to advance a thousand pounds, being one third of my mother's fortune, that would appertain to me; and which he had promised should be mine when I married. This was peremptorily refused; and some harsh expressions conveyed at the same time.

"With my husband I went to Canterbury, where we had not been more than five weeks before the regiment was ordered to Portsmouth, to embark again for Portugal. The expense of travelling, and waiting there, lessened our little store; and our confined income would not allow that I should be left behind. I was therefore under

the necessity of submitting to all the painful and disgusting scenes a young female of retired habits is but ill calculated to encounter; and which I knew would be most distressing to my husband: but what then appeared as a misfortune I now look back upon as a blessing; for had I not been so near the field of battle, my husband, who was numbered with the dead, could not have been saved from being thrown into one common tomb with his slaughtered countrymen: and for your assistance, sir, never, never can we be sufficiently grateful."

I was too much interested in the recital of this little account of my new acquaintance to think the time tedious, while she was relating it. Mr. Mansfield, after the ball was extracted, had fallen into a sleep, which lasted nearly two hours. He was not allowed to speak; but his affectionate wife had been preparing some broth, while she was telling me her little history.

She is a most exemplary young wo-

man, and I very much admire her courage, as well as her tenderness for her brave husband. She told me, this morning, she had formed a plan for their future support; and this is to take a little needle work, which she could get privately procured for her.

"Not, sir, (she exclaimed with animation) that I am desirous of concealment, because it is disgraceful to do any thing in my power to prevent my husband from running in debt; but as it may lessen him in the eyes of his brother officers, I would not wish them to know Mansfield's wife was perhaps making their shirts."

I told her I hoped there would be no necessity for this expedient; and, that if Mr. Mansfield recovered, I had little doubt but he would have a company in a few weeks.

On my quitting Tormes, I sent a letter, in which I enclosed a sum I thought might be useful at present, referring the payment to our meeting at Sunny Vale. It was rather a curious

incident, that Mr. Haldy, her father, who lives at Sevenoaks, should have fixed on me for his daughter; and that our first meeting should be in Portugal.

Your conjecture, that it was possible I might be deceived with respect to the conduct of Emily Melville, I could almost persuade myself is just; and though I may never see her again, yet to think of her, as innocent, as she is beautiful, is so interwoven with my dreams of bliss, that to consider her in any other light is almost death to me. Amidst the din of war, hours spent in consultation, night after night passed in transcribing papers scarcely legible, yet at every interval does uncontrollable thought carry me to Melmoth House, and to the first evening when Emily broke in upon me as a new luminary in the creation. With what grace and dignity did she approach us, led in by Sir James Mitford. In another instance, that memorable night of torture presents itself to my

imagination, and all the horrors of jealousy and despair seem ready to crush me by their direful influence. Absence may weaken, but not eradicate, my affection for that lovely woman.

Write to me often, and send your letters to the War Office. I shall receive them safely.

LETTER XXXV.

MISS MELVILLE TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

Reading, Jan. 14, 1813.

My dear Maria,

NOTWITHSTANDING the inclemency of the season, Emily has grown charmingly; and as the spring advances, she will improve. Indeed she is a lovely child.

Whom she is like I know not; though her features become more settled. Lady Mitford declares she has seen some one she resembles. In this

she is more particularly confirmed by an incident, which occurred the day before yesterday, when, in defiance of a heavy fall of snow, I went to Melmoth House. Lady Mitford being quite recovered, was so good as to go with me. Indeed I never go there without her, or Mrs. M. Syms. My heart always feels a pang on entering that house. Nor can you wonder it should do so, without attributing to me a degree of insensibility I am not yet arrived at.

I never have had the resolution to go up stairs 'till that day, since I left it. Mrs. Lee, the house-keeper, expressed much alarm about the snow melting, as she had observed some wet in the library, which is under what was in happier times my dressing room. She requested me to go up, and see where it came in. I did so. But finding the door locked, I returned for the key. Mrs. Lee said, she had not got it, but hoped that I had, or knew where it was, as she had not seen it since her master went to London in such a melancholy way.

The window-shutters were partly open. She had sent up a workman to examine if the water came in from the ceiling. This he could not discover, as he was unable to open the window, or see the ceiling; and the floor was so covered with small pieces of paper that there was no telling if the wet came in there. Mrs. Lee, being fearful the books would be injured, proposed to force the dressing room door. I begged she would do no such thing; but remove the books into the small drawing room.—"You speak of your master, Mrs. Lee, as if he had lately been here," said Lady Mitford.—"Oh, dear! no, my Lady, he has not been here since the night that accident happened at Dr. Syms's."—"What accident?" I eagerly inquired. "La! ma'am, the night the child was brought you."

Lady Mitford gave me a look full of meaning, which I could not misunderstand. I trembled excessively. My breathing became difficult. Lady

Mitford observing the change in my countenance, kindly motioned me to leave the room, and I went into the library, not to amuse myself by reading, for such a mist came before my eyes, that I could not have read even the title page of any book there. I opened the window, cold as it was. I waited anxiously for a summons to leave the house. Nearly half an hour I remained here, almost sinking under the torture of suspense.

From this painful situation I was relieved by Lady Mitford coming to me. —"My dear, have you found the book you wanted; the carriage is waiting at the door, if you are ready to go." I caught up a book, without seeing what it was. The snow being drifted, we could not proceed to visit the pensioners. Both of us were for sometime silent. Lady Mitford, being curious to know if our ideas coincided, asked me what I thought of Sir Charles being at Reading the same evening little Emily was left at Dr. Syms's."—"My

dear madam," I replied, "I scarcely know what to think; nor can I form any judgement of that incident 'till I have heard what passed between you and Mrs. Lee, after I left the room."—"Very little, my dear, though I detained Mrs. Lee in the hope that, if there were any other circumstance than that of Sir Charles having been in the neighbourhood that night, unknown to us, I might find it out." With some degree of quickness I asked "But what, my dear madam, did Mrs. Lee say?"—"Don't be impatient, my dear Emily," cried her ladyship, kindly laying her hand on mine, "and I will tell you all that passed. What I understand is, that Sir Charles having left Sunny Vale, in good health and spirits, the very day he arrived at Reading, in the evening. I asked Mrs. Lee if she knew how her master travelled. She replied that the servant, who came with him, informed her that his master came to Reading in a chaise and four, which he discharged, sending him on

to Melmoth House; but Sir Charles was there in less than ten minutes after his servant. Mrs. Lee added, she prepared his bed, but it was not used.

"Now the part, which I am going to relate, appears most mysterious. Mrs. Lee said, she met her master in the saloon. He could with difficulty articulate that he wished for a candle. As she said, he seemed almost suffocated; and rather flew than ran up stairs: and went immediately to Miss Melville's dressing room. "I was quite distressed," the good woman continued, "to see my master so different from what he used to be. I heard him move the chairs, and walk about the room, and sigh so bitterly, my very heart ached for him, though I did not know the cause; and I ventured to tap at the door to ask if I should bring his honor any refreshment."—"None, none, Mrs. Lee, "he said, "I can take nothing at present." I told him there was a good fire in the drawing room,

but his answer was "You may go to bed Mrs. Lee; I am very busy; if I am cold I will go to the fire." I went to my own room, my lady, but not to bed; for I was too unhappy to sleep: and about one o'clock, an express arrived for my master to go to London. I had made some chocolate; and pressed him so much to take one cup before he set off, that he took a little, because he said he would not hurt me by rejecting my kind attentions. I could not help weeping to see him so altered." —Nor, in truth, could I refrain from doing the same, while Lady Mitford was relating Mrs. Lee's account of her master's misery, the source of which was too evident to admit of a doubt. And the father of the little innocent Emily is surely discovered in the person of Sir Charles Belmont. Lady Mitford says she is convinced of the same, though she is, I think, too harsh in condemning him for the art and duplicity, with which he has conducted himself in this affair. Oh! he little

knows me, if he thinks it necessary to deceive, to ensure my tenderest care of any one bearing affinity to him.

But who is the mother? That is the next question, which presents itself, and still is enveloped in mystery. If privately married, as I have more than once heard Mrs. Howard hint he was, though I did not then believe it, there can be no reason, now Mrs. Melmoth is no more, for keeping his marriage secret. The more I think of this affair, the more am I bewildered and lost in amazement. His distress upon the occasion is not so very extraordinary. Certainly Sir Charles has a heart exquisitely humane; of course must feel deeply on leaving his infant to the care of any but its mother, who most probably is either gone with him, or has followed since. Surely, it would have been more natural for the mother to have remained in England, to take charge of her own child; but I imagine she is a foreigner, and takes the opportunity of her husband's going abroad to

visit her friends. The child must be older than Dr. Syms thought it was. I requested Lady Mitford not to mention to Sir James, or the Syms family, the discovery we had made.

I was impatient to pay a visit to little Emily, which we did immediately on our return. Every feature did we examine with the most scrutinizing curiosity, but not the least resemblance could we trace, though now prepared by knowing one of its parents. With more than usual tenderness did I press the dear infant to my heart, and secretly vowed never to part with it, but to cherish it with unabated affection, 'till her parents were not averse to acknowledge their innocent child.

LETTER XXXVI.

HON. MRS. BRENSLY TO MISS MELVILLE.

Bath, Feb. 1. 1813.

EMILY, my dearest Emily, you must forget Belmont; he is un-

worthy of your love; undeserving of any woman's esteem. Ungrateful wretch, as he is! could he find no one to take care of his brats, but the woman, who rescued him almost from poverty to raise him to affluence? I cannot endure any of his race; and hope never to hear his name mentioned again. My Brensly, with all his faults, is worth a thousand such hypocrites. I never knew my mild good father express himself so warmly against any one, as against this insidious Belmont. I will now cease my animadversions; but do not defend him, Emily: I cannot bear it. Oh! that I were a man! I would follow him to the antipodes, but I would make him smart for his villainies. I must have done with the subject; though, were I to write as I feel, volumes would not express half my resentment at his ingratitude; shabby fellow!

Mrs. Howard, I am inclined to think, is the best of the set. There was no deceit in her, certainly. I shall fall

again into the invectives: and on no other subject can I think. Your old servant, Evans, is better: she is helping her sister in dress making. Mr. C. Howard and Brensly went to Bristol the next morning early: and from thence the former went to Ireland. Brensly is gone to meet him on his return. I expect them this evening.

LETTER XXXVII.

HON. MRS. BRENSLY TO MISS MELVILLE.

Bath, March 7, 1812.

COME to us, my dear Emily, I am persuaded a little change will be of service to you; and do prevail on Mrs. M. Syms to accompany you. Brensly is gone, no body can tell where, with his unhappy friend.

What a prey to grief is Mr. C. Howard! The first evening of their arrival (I don't mean the evening previous to

his flight to Bristol, then he came and was gone again without my ever seeing him,) he now retired as soon as he entered the house.

The next day, as Lady Harriet (who has been with me a few weeks) and I were returning from a walk, Brensly and his friend were coming out of the house. Brensly just introduced us, and passed on. I was amazingly struck by Mr. Howard's figure; and I am mistaken if Lady Harriet does not think him a fine fellow. Brensly persuaded him to join us at tea; or rather he obliged himself to do so, as my good man refused to leave him. But we were very much shocked during tea. Harriet, who had observed an unusual silence, addressed some question to my father. The cup, with its contents, dropped instantly from the hand of Mr. Howard. We were all alarmed; and the poor man quitted the room. Brensly following him. He soon returned with an apology from his friend

for the disturbance he had occasioned. The voice of Lady Harriet, so like his lost Caroline had suddenly, affected him; and he hoped we would excuse his not joining us again that evening. This incident determined my amiable sister to quit us the next day, to make a visit to a friend at Wells, Mr. Howard being too ill to leave his apartment 'till late that evening.

Harriet was gone before I saw him; and I believe he was not sorry to find she had left us. He was more inclined to converse with my father than he had been with any one, Brensly said, since his misfortune. For three weeks he appeared tolerably composed; though, on some days, he would scarcely allow his friend to be with him. After that time he became restless. And wishing for a change, Mr. Brensly has made another excursion with him.

I miss my good man, I assure you; and he tells me I am not to expect him for three long weeks at least. Bath agrees better with my father than it

did, which is a great comfort to me. You have now no excuse; so come, my dear girl, to your affectionate,

M. BRENSLY.

LETTER XXXVIII.

MISS MELVILLE TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

Reading. March 13, 1813.

I WILL not refuse you, my dear Maria. Your good father's requests are to me commands, which shall be obeyed. Mrs. M. Syms too will accept your kind invitation. I hope my good Evans can be spared to wait on us, as I cannot venture to take Lucy with me again. We think of being with you early in the following week.

Your invectives, my dear friend, believe me, are not all just; and on every account you pain me. I cannot allow you to say that I rescued Sir Charles

Belmont from poverty. No, Maria; though he has erred, he is rich, according to my estimation of worth. Oh! how few young men would have prosecuted their studies on so small an allowance, as he reserved for himself, that he might be enabled to liquidate the debts of his father, and clear his paternal estate from incumbrance.

And what will surprise you, as it did Lady Mitford and myself, is that Mr. Dwyer informed me, the other day, that Sir Charles has always declined receiving any of the rents; and that the whole produce from the Sussex estate, and all the Melmoth property, except what has been expended upon repairs, expenses of the house, and pensioners, remains with Mr. Dwyer, subject to no other orders, but to be guided by my directions. Sir James and Lady Mitford think, with me, this last circumstance equally strange as the rest. It is indeed altogether inexplicable.

As I shall so soon see you, I will spare

both you and myself any further observations at present.

LETTER XXXIX.

LADY MITFORD TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

Mitford Hall, March 16, 1813.

My dear Madam,

AS our beloved Emily will soon be with you, I write unknown to her, merely to prepare you for the great alteration you must expect to see in the person of this dear girl. Be tender I beseech you, my dear Mrs. Brensly, on the subject of Sir Charles Belmont. An attachment so deeply rooted is not to be eradicated but by a conviction of the unworthiness of its object, and great exertions on her part, which I trust will effect more than the arguments of friends. The dear girl has too much reason to consider herself the dupe of wretched duplicity;

though she endeavours to palliate the act, and persuade herself that nothing but imperious necessity could have induced him to behave so (I must call it) basely to her; and she says, she has no doubt that it will sometime be explained to us; and place this matter in a point of view very different from what it bears at present.

I cannot think so favorably of Sir Charles. And one circumstance, unknown to Emily, serves to confirm me in my opinion of his very reprehensible conduct in this affair; viz. that he arrived at Reading in a chaise and four, the very night the infant was so strangely left at Dr. Syms's: and his not going in it to Melmoth House could only be that the woman should get off undetected. I was anxious to learn if he was seen by any of the family; and in this I had an opportunity of being satisfied the morning after we had been to Melmoth House. Miss Melville's servant, Lucy, came with a message from her mistress. I asked

her, if Sir Charles Belmont had been at Reading lately.—"La! my lady, (cried the girl) he has been a long time over seas, fighting the French; and has not been at our house, that I have heard of, since that combustible night little Miss was brought there."—"And was Sir Charles there then, Lucy?" I asked. "I am sure, my lady, I don't know if he went in; but this I am sure of, he frightened me out of my wits."—"How frightened you, Lucy?" "Why, my Lady, I was sent for a nurse for little Miss Emily; and, opening the door in a hurry, I ran against a man; and, who should that be, but his honor Sir Charles, close to the door. I was in such a fright, that my heart was up in my mouth. He caught hold of my arm; and said something about Miss Melville, but I have quite forgotten what it was. I broke away from him, as fast as possible, but did not think of shutting the door. And, on my return with nurse, I found several people in the hall; but whether Sir Charles

went in, or no, I never heard." Is not this account a confirmation of our suspicions, and fully justifies the unfavorable conclusions arising from the coincident circumstances, I have related? Nothing but a well regulated mind, determined to obey every dictate of conscience, could have supported my dear Emily through the various trials of the last thirteen months. And now, alas! I fear her health is falling a sacrifice to struggling passions.

From what Mrs. Lee said of Sir Charles he must have been almost in a state of distraction himself; which is not to be wondered at, if he had one atom of gratitude in his composition. It is the most extraordinary affair I ever met with.

I never saw, and the remark of all our circle here was, that no man could appear more attached to a young woman, than Sir Charles seemed to Miss Melville; though I often thought he took great pains to conceal it. And,

if he was married, as Emily says Mrs. Howard sometimes hinted he was, he did perfectly right. But it would have been far more honorable to have avowed his situation, as he could not be blind to the growing partiality of my young friend.

I neither blame the dear girl; nor am surprised at her attachment. The unexpected length of Sir Charles's stay at Melmoth House, and the peculiar circumstance attending it, led unavoidably to a familiar acquaintance with one of the most accomplished and agreeable men, I ever met. He has also the advantage of a very handsome person, which, we all know, is no small recommendation to our sex.

I have a plan in view, of taking Emily away, for three or four months, from the vicinity of Melmoth House, by going to some watering place. A change of society, and amusements, may assist in restoring her to health and spirits.

That innocent child too serves to keep alive sentiments of tenderness for the father, which I hope may be diminished by absence. As I cannot leave home before May, detain Emily as long as possible,

Adieu, my dear madam.

With sentiments of esteem,

I remain your's truly,

ISABELLA MITFORD.

LETTER XL.

HON. MRS. BRENSLY TO LADY MITFORD.

Bath, March 23, 1813.

My dear Madam,

YOUR very friendly letter prepared us for the alteration in the person of our dear Emily, who, with her amiable companion, arrived here safely last evening. My father, who is little more than fifty years of age, has long

been an invalid; and was half dozing in his chair when Miss Melville was announced. Scarcely was her name heard, when she was at my father's feet. Never shall I forget the affecting meeting, when the most lovely and graceful of her sex was on her knee before one of the most venerable of human beings. The voice of Emily, and her suppliant posture, with—"Bless! oh, bless your daughter Emily!"—instantaneously roused him to press her in his feeble arms; confirming by his discourse, and glistening eye, that approbation, his letters had before conveyed. I caught the dear girl, as she was nearly sinking, exhausted by fatigue and agitation. Nor could I restrain my tears; though I wished to conceal how greatly I was affected to see the delicate state in which she is. Emily observed it; and to remove my anxiety, sweetly said, "Maria, if you choose to fix your residence at Bath, you must expect to see many pale faces among the visitors. I come in

from Mr. Brensly. He is at Southampton, where Mr. C. Howard is, extremely ill. He therefore does not propose returning to Bath 'till his friend is able to accompany him, which he fears will be three weeks, or a month, though Mr. Howard is on the recovery. Mr. Brensly's attention to the invalid tends to remove much of the prejudice, I had conceived against him on our first acquaintance.

Dear Mr. Ashbourne too expresses himself perfectly satisfied with the choice Maria has made. This postponement of Mr. Brensly's return will induce me to extend my visit a fortnight longer. And as Mrs. M. Syms seems very happy with her new friends, I shall stay without any reluctance. And dear, excellent Mr. Ashbourne does not press me to wait the arrival of my Maria's husband. Yet the idea of coming to visit her in his absence, and leaving her before his return, is not exactly congenial to my feelings. But, in a few months more, I think we may

meet, without any of those disagreeable retrospections, that at this time would have been such an alloy to a first meeting with Maria and her father since her marriage, and the loss of my revered Mrs. Melmoth.

How grateful to my heart are the commendations of Mr. Ashbourne. Every sentence, I utter, has the approving smile of Maria and her father: very different from some I could mention.

I will not lead to a subject, I am making every possible effort to efface from my mind. But memory is a treacherous friend, and will present objects to our view, when least—wished for, I was going to say,—expected, I meant. Every one of that family I am trying to forget, little Emily excepted. Sweet little innocent! I will not withdraw my care or affection from thee!

Mrs. M. Syms desires to be most kindly remembered: as does Mr. Ashbourne and Mr. Brenly.

LETTER XLII.

SIR CHARLES BELMONT TO COL. YORKE.

Upper Estremadura,
May 13, 1813.

My dear Friend,

I HAVE been greatly disappointed by not hearing from you; but so many accidents happen to interrupt correspondence, I suppose you may have written, but not observed my injunction of sending your letter to the war office.

As the tide of fortune has turned in favor of Great Britain and her allies, some shallow politicians think little now remains to be done by us, but to keep what we have gained; though to do this, and follow up those advantages with the enthusiastic ardour of a British soldier, much blood must be shed,

and the lives of many brave men lost.

I am in better spirits, than when I wrote last; and this, in consequence of a resolution I have formed, and for which I expect you, with the rest of the world, will denounce me no better than a madman, even for dreaming of.

Yorke, I am serious.—I am determined to offer my hand to Emily Melville. I see you start with astonishment, and cry, "Poor fellow! he is the slave of passion; or his reason has forsaken him." No! believe me, my dear friend, it is neither; but the result of mature deliberation. Hear what I have to urge before you condemn me, and bear in mind what I owe to that generous girl. To restore that fallen angel to her rank in society, so far as a matrimonial connection can effect, is one object I have in view.—To restore her to her own good opinion, or that, she once held in mine, is not in my power. Although I was not the cause of her lapse, yet the liberal act in my

favor, no doubt, prevented Brensly from making the poor, but only reparation, a seducer can make. Though the miscreant would have made the rich heiress of Melmoth House his wife, the unprotected, deluded curate's daughter was deserted, and left to deplore her too easy confidence.

I candidly confess I do not expect happiness in such a union. My esteem is so much shaken, that I cannot answer even for my present feelings; and perhaps shall be better pleased with her refusal, than acceptance of an offer made at the shrine of gratitude.

Do not mistake me, Yorke; for, love Emily Melville I do, though under the present circumstances I should not have thought of her as a wife, but for the reasons I have given. That love, I have felt for Emily, can never be transferred to another. *Have* felt,—did I say? Oh! I *do* at this moment: and present to my imagination does she appear arrayed in all the loveliness, that the most enthusiastic admirer can form

to himself of perfection. Oh, Emily! that I could forget what thou wert; or that I were lost to a sense of what thou art! Memory! thou record of good and evil, cease your torturing mementos: misery is in your train. No more will I indulge my pen on this subject, except to tell you I am prepared for all the epithets, that you, and my other friends, may have in store for me. Perhaps the indignant appellation of ---*fool*, *dupe*, are not too strong.

You may doubt the sincerity of my intentions. I only wait for an opportunity of convincing you I am serious. And I have nothing to request but that, when you are disposed to lash me on this subject, you will recollect the noble sacrifice made by---Emily Melville ---for

CHARLES BELMONT.

LETTER XLIII.

MISS MELVILLE TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

My dear Maria,

Reading, May 10, 1813.

WE arrived in perfect safety at Reading last monday evening; ---quite an assemblage of friends in my drawing room. Sir James, and Lady Mitford; Mrs. Newland, and her daughters; Dr. and Mrs. Syms; and Lady Mitford's niece. My improved appearance was the favorite topic for some time. Lady Mitford scarcely let me breathe before she told me I must collect all my smartest wardrobe to accompany Sir James and her to Brighton. On my hesitating, she declared no excuses should be admitted; and it is now settled we are to go there next monday week, where Sir James

has engaged a house for three months. Lady Mitford has taken Lucy into her family; therefore I can now receive my good Evans, who had better go to Mrs. Brooke's, in Tichfield Street, and from thence join me at Brighton.

My little Emily had quite forgotten me, though she seemed to be pleased with my caresses. I shall write as soon as we are settled.

Love to your dear father.

Ever, ever your's,

E. MELVILLE.

LETTER XLIV.

HON. MRS. BRENSLY TO MISS MELVILLE.

Bath, May 10, 1813.

I AM very sorry, my dear Emily, you did not stay a few days longer with us. I think, if you could just take a peep at our breakfast table,

you would, at this time, be highly amused.

Who shall I begin with first. O! the master of the house, as in duty bound. Well then, he shall stand first upon the list; but as he moves not without his melancholy friend, I must usher them in together, as they came the day after you left Bath. My good man's cheek glowed with affection as he met his Maria, who waited not to receive her lord and mas--ter, with all the formality of one of my present visitors; but, running to meet him, was in his arms before he had advanced half a dozen steps into the hall.

Mr. Cleveland Howard is in better spirits than when they went their ramble; and he can now sit quietly in his chair, though Lady Harriet should happen to speak more than a monosyllable of *yes*, or *no*. The man's alive yet; and I am not without hope he may turn his peeper on Harriet. I say peeper,--for, poor fellow, he has

got an unbecoming cold in one eye, over which he wears a shade.

The day after Brensly and his friend returned, who should arrive but Lady Margaret Brensly. I thought something very uncommon was near us, some where between earth and sky, as the people in the street seemed to fix their attention on a carriage drawn by four fat long tailed black horses. The coachman in the same excellent condition. The very reverse were the inhabitants of the vehicle, which, stopping at our door, proved to be Lady Margaret and her abigail; both so unlike coachy, that their yellow skin seemed to be drawn slovenly over their bones. Poor creatures! they have long given over the exercise of running, or they would have made a famous rattling upon the stairs; and probably I should have thought a game at backgammon had been playing there.

The next morning, dear Lady Harriet too dropped from the clouds. Lady Margaret is taking a house here.

I believe we shall make a purchase at Bath-Easton. If so, there we are to live "'till death do us part." Brensly may have plenty of amusement when he acts as one of the Quorum. I am told Lady Margaret thinks I might be improved. I hope, poor dear, she does not intend to undertake the task. Her ladyship was in the procession, when his present majesty was crowned: an honor she does not fail to inform us of ten times a day, if she is provoked to speak so often. I am reminded of the distance that wives, in former times, observed. No laughing with any man, but her husband. "Was that the reason," I simply asked, "your ladyship did not marry?" This innocent question set all her wrinkles in motion, like the ripples on the margin of a stream. I began to be frightened, as something like a tear threatened to escape. This I never dreamt of; and really felt ashamed for my flippancy, which had called forth recollections painful to one, whose age

ought to have secured my respect, if her near connection to my husband had not. Nor was I better satisfied with myself by the answer, which was at rolly-pooly in aunt's throat, who drawing herself up higher and higher to give consequence to her person, and awe poor me, who had never walked in a procession of any sort or kind, beyond the funeral of my papa's terrier, I sat in humble expectation of I knew not what, and wished myself any where, but where I was.

Well, she actually moved one of her hands in a kind of a flourish;—"Mrs. Brensly;" she screamed out, "Mrs. Brensly;" in a lower key, "you are not aware, I believe, that you are wounding the feelings of the person you addressed that question to; and that you may avoid committing the same error in future, I think it is necessary to inform you, that at the age of nineteen I was on the point of being united to a very amiable man, who was cruelly murdered when handing me

from the carriage, as we were going to be married. The blood from his wound fell upon my dress. The wretch, who committed the dreadful deed, was actuated by jealousy, as I was afterward informed, and shot himself as they were conveying him before a magistrate. For two months I was insensible to all that passed around me, and when I did recover, it was to a keener sense of my misery. This fatal catastrophe made so deep an impression on my young mind, that I never made a second choice." Here her ladyship ceased.

I expressed, and I really felt, what I did express, the utmost contrition and concern for my offence: my tears for her misfortune bore ample testimony of my sincerity. I paid the old lady a thousand times more attention than I ever did before; and this I have continued to do till I am become a first-rate favorite. She even tells me, if we go to town next winter, she will present me herself to her majesty.

My dear father is really quite gay and animated; not by aunt Margaret, I can assure you. The playful Harriet amuses us all, except Mr. C. Howard; and before him she is almost dumb. I hear that termagant Howard has some of her offences come home to her in that pretty son of hers, who is frequently missing for a week or more; makes demands for money as fast as mamma can wrench it from papa; and games with all the accompaniments necessary to make him a disgrace to his family: that is, the outskirts, for I do not conceive any act of the Hottentot son can disgrace the she-bear of a mother.

Strange it is, that, whenever that family come across my imagination, my blood boils up, and overflows in some pretty little phillippic against them. As this is acknowledged by me, I think I am intitled to some credit for my forbearance, when you, my dear Emily, was with me. And, oh! if you had known how my poor tongue suffered by being bitten, when just ready to lash,

---you would, I know you would, have pitied me. I do believe I am not very good humoured to day. I shall be better to-morrow, as some of the supernumeraries of my house will repose their bones in another.

Write to me all you see, and all you hear; every thing in which you are concerned is interesting to

MARIA BRENSLY.

LETTER XLV.

MISS MELVILLE TO HON. MRS. BRENSLY.

Brighton, June 14, 1810.

BY the papers, my dear Maria, all the world may be informed of my arrival at Brighton. I should not have had the honor of being thus noticed, but that I form a part of Sir James Mitford's family.

We made a three days journey, that we might enjoy the beauties of the

country through which we passed. I should be delighted with Brighton, if it were not so gay and populous even at this time when the season is scarcely commenced. And before the great influx of company I hope we shall have left it. Now, do not call me a dissatisfied being, because I cannot relish the perpetual round of amusement this attractive place affords; but one of less celebrity, and more retirement, would, I own, better suit the present state of my mind, which is by no means gay, though I have in some degree recovered my former cheerfulness.

You know we have not been here more than a fortnight; but we have made the most of our time. Each of us has met some friend, or acquaintance. Sir James and Lady Mitford recognized old friends in a Mr. and Mrs. Montague, who have three daughters, and a son with them. Lord Darnly has renewed his acquaintance with me. You may per-

haps remember I danced with him twice at Bath, and met him at his aunt's. His father, Lord Headly, was, some years since, an intimate friend of Sir James Mitford; but at a county meeting they disagreed upon some political subject, and a coolness has existed ever since. However, it does not extend to the son, who appears a worthy young man, and is a great favorite with my good friends; and, being musical, he is admitted to our little concerts, in which the Montagues form the principal part. Those evenings are to me the most agreeable, as on such occasions, I can almost fancy myself with the good Syms's and Newlands.

It is particularly fortunate, that Mr. Montague is here, as under his protection, we can ramble over the downs, or where ever we may be inclined to go; for he is so careful of his daughters, that he never suffers them to walk, or ride out without him.

To-morrow evening is the first ball,

Great preparations are making by the Miss Montagues and Eliza. I suppose I must do the same, though, believe me, Maria, I feel no other pleasure in doing so, than as it gratifies those kind friends, who interest themselves about me; and too often I wear a semblance of cheerfulness foreign to my heart. No more of this, you cry; and bid me cease to think of one, who ought not to have a place in my recollection. I would obey the friendly mandate, if I could; but indeed, Maria, I find it as impossible to set bounds to busy thought, as to the waves that I now behold rising in frothy columns, sometimes hiding, then bearing the little sail aloft, which fearlessly encounters its bold antagonist, to provide luxuries for the table of the great, and food for the family of the intrepid mariner.

The sea is to me a grand, and even an awful object of contemplation; and, when I am uninterruptedly viewing, and listening to its stormy beatings

against the cliffs, or the gentle murmurings along its pebbly borders, I feel an indescribable melancholy pleasure; and never quit it but with a regret similar to what I experience on parting with agreeable friends.

Another object of admiration now engages my attention. The India fleet is going up the channel. How different are my sensations to those I felt but a few minutes since. On these immense ships, heavily laden with commodities to please our acquired taste for foreign productions, the westerly swell, which made me tremble for the fate of the little sail, makes no other impression than that of quickening their passage to the Downs. It is indeed a most gratifying sight to numbers now assembled on the shore, increased too by observing the convoy, who proudly keep aloof; and on whose masts, which seem almost to touch the clouds, the British pendant is displayed, assuring safety to those under their protection, but destruction

to the enemy, should they have the temerity to approach to intercept any part of that commercial wealth, they have themselves neglected.

I think, my dear Maria, you have not an idea of living to old age, or even of surviving the lillies and roses that now mantle on your cheek. Alas, my dear girl, all these, if you live, must fade; and the tinge of saffron spread over that face, which you now view in your glass with so much pleasure.

This is a mortifying prospect to youth. Then let us feel for those, who have experienced this change; and not by our sarcastic remarks, insult our ancient friends for the natural consequences of longevity, which few there are, but will take some pains to arrive at.

Lady Margaret Brensly, whom you have treated with so much levity, has a strong claim to your tender and kindest attentions, independent of the near relationship to your husband. The circumstances, she related to you,

are well known to Lady Mitford, who says Lady Margaret was much admired in her youth, and respected for her misfortunes. Be considerate then, I beseech you, my dear friend, she has endured enough to reduce her to that emaciated form you scoff at.

I hear Dr. Syms has taken a small house for Mrs. Syms at Tunbridge Wells, for a few weeks, that she may drink the waters, which I hope she will derive benefit from.

With kind regards to your good father, and Mr. Brensly, I am

your's truly,

E. MELVILLE.

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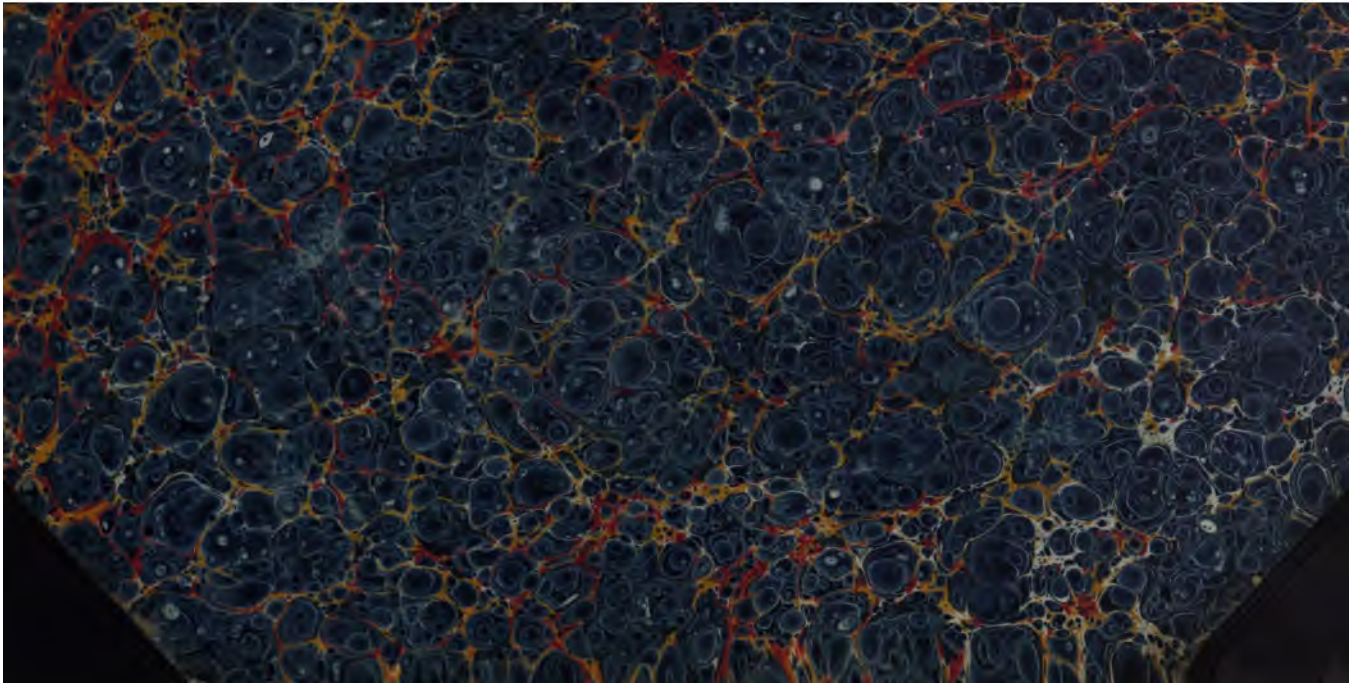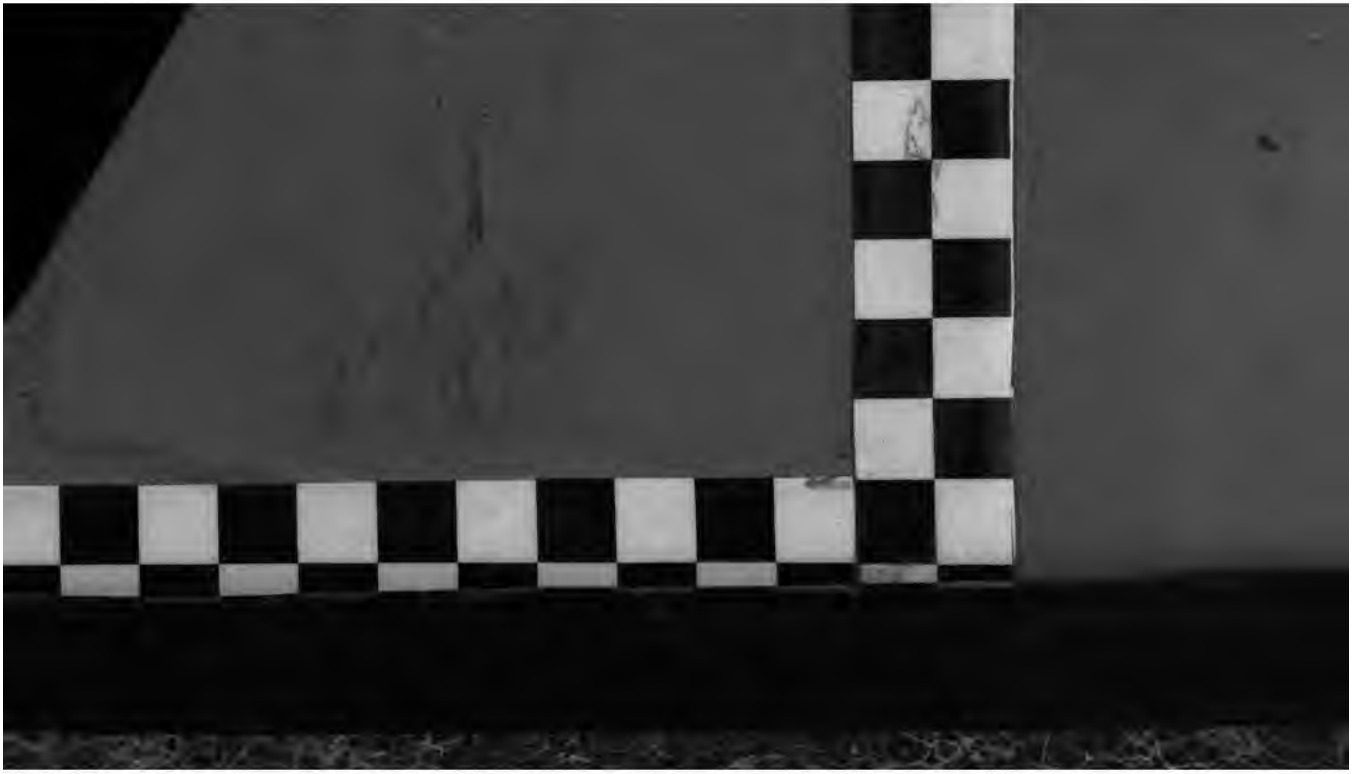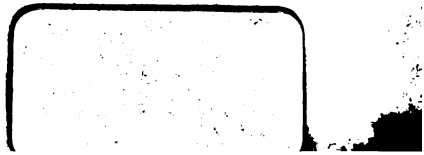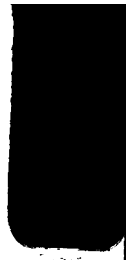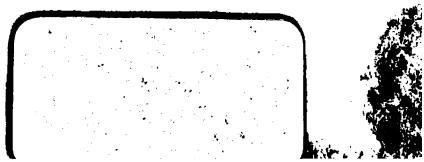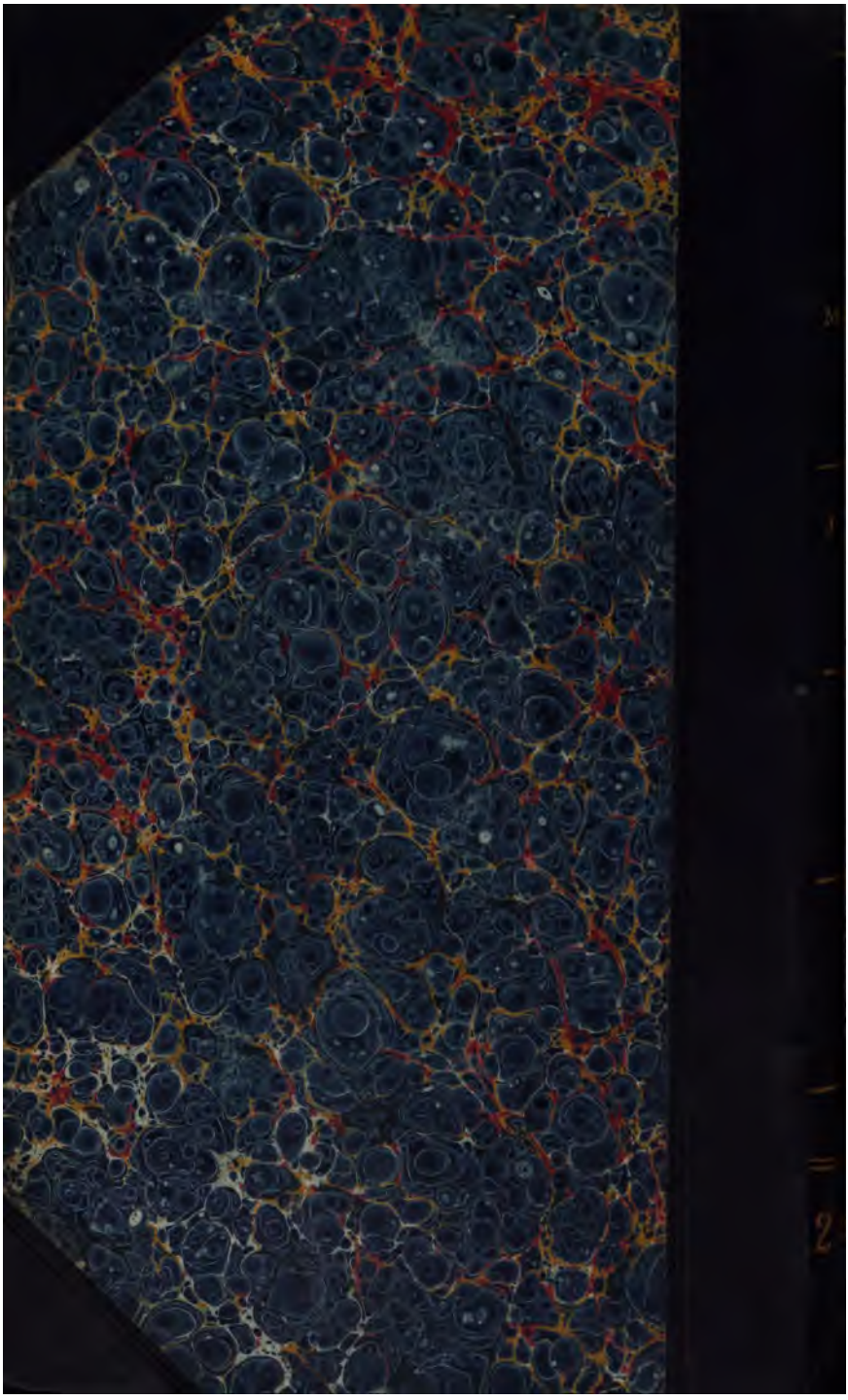
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